JUSTICE MUFTI
MUHAMMAD TAQI USMANI



# AN APPROACH TO THE QURANIC SCIENCES

ULOOMUL QURAN

DARUL ISHAAT
KARACHI-1 PAKISTAN

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***ULOOM-UL-QURĀN***

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## DEDICATION

To my respected father

MAULANA MUFTI MUHAMMAD SHAFI رحمته الله عليه

in whose person lay for me

*the compassion of an exemplary – nay*, an unmatched

– father, an impeccable teacher, and a sagacious guardian

and mentor.

and to none else on earth

my love and my devotion are directed.

May Allah shower Mercy on him.

*Without his prior permission* do I dedicate this little

effort to him with the submission.

اگر سیاہ دلم، داغ لالہ زار تُوام

وگر کشادہ جبینم، گلِ بہار توام

Muhammad Taqi Usmani

# Publisher's Submission

The English translation of Justice Mufti Moḥammad Taqi Usmani's well known work *Uloom al-Quran* is in your hands. Maulana Mufti Muḥammad Shafi رحمة الله عليه, and Maulana Muḥammad Yousuf Binnori رحمة الله عليه, have spoken about the book and its author in their introducing remarks.

I had commissioned the English translation of the book in 1992 and finally the book is published having gone through various steps in the nine years. We bow down our heads in prostration before Allah in gratitude for having enabled us to achieve this task. It is a work, first of all, on the science of a great Book that the Qur'an is, and secondly, a scholar of the standing of Justice Mufti Muḥammad Taqi Usmani, my respected uncle, has written it. May Allah grant him health, peace and security.

We have tried to reflect the high standard of the book in its translation too. We hope that we have been successful in our effort and we are to blame for any short coming in the result. I request the readers to point out whatever mistake they detect in the translation so that amendments can be made in the next edition. I also request readers to remember me, my father and my family members in their prayers. May Allah reward them. And may He reward every one associated with this work Aameen!

**Khalil Ashraf Usmani**

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**PART TWO**

**THE SCIENCE OF TAFSIR (EXEGESIS)**

## AN APPRECIATION

Shaikh ul-Ḥadīth, Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Yūsuf Binorī رحمة الله عليه.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّيْنَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds. And may blessings and peace be on Sayyidina Muḥammad, the last of the Prophets, and his family and companions- all of them.

Many reliable and worthy books in Arabic on the sciences of the Quran are available. They are composed by our worthy predecessors and later day scholars. However, only the Ulama can benefit from them. Most of these books were written for the earlier people and indeed, satisfied their thirst of knowledge.

When Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan published his exegesis of the Quran and other writings in Delhi, he played havoc with Islamic beliefs and presented the new generation with unfounded ideologies, belittling Prophethood and rejecting Miracles, Paradise, Hell, angels, and the devils. He suggested innovative ideas and principles for interpreting the Qur'anic facts. At that time, Allah caused Mawlana Abdul Haq Haqqani Dahlavi, Deobandi to rise. He wrote an excellent exegesis of the Qur'ān entitled *fatḥ al-Mannān* and a superb *Muqaddamah* (introduction) *al-Bayan fi Uloom al-Qurān*. In the first volume of the exegesis, he included a summory of the *muqaddamah*. In this way, he fulfilled the need of his times.

However, keeping the present day trends in mind, a

fresh approach was needed to present to our new generation the concepts and facts of the Qur'ān. The mischief of the orientalists had to be offset by telling our new generation about waḥy, descent of the Qur'ān the various recitals and its uniqueness. If readers get an insight of these subjects they would be able to ward off doubts and misgivings created in their minds by the orientalists and western minded Muslims.

*Al-Ḥamdulillah*, this lacuna has been very ably filled by my respected brother, Mawlanā Muḥammad Taqi Usmāni, the worthy son of Mawlana Muḥammad Shafī رحمة الله عليه. he wrote it down as an exhaustive *MuqaddaMah* to the *Ma'arif-ul-Qur'ān* and did a great religious service, and a favour to the Ummah. May Allah enhance him in knowledge, give him more writing power and ability and enable him to be of further service to religion.

I have seen some parts of this work thoroughly and, some others, at random. Praise be to Allah, I am very happy at it and my heart gives out a prayer.

وَفَّقَنَا اللّٰهُ وَاِيَّاهُ لِخِدْمَةِ دِيْنِهٖ اِبْتِغَاءً لِوَجْهِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ، وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ سَيِّدِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَخَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّيْنَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَ اَصْحَابِهٖ وَعُلَمَاءِ اُمَّتِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

My Allah choose us and him for service to His religion purely to earn His pleasure. And may blessings of Allah be on Sayyidina Muḥammad,the Chief to the worlds, seal of Prophet, and on his family, his companions and the scholars of the ummah–all of them!

***Muhammad Yusuf B innori***
(May Allah forgive him)
Madrasah 'Arabiyah Islamiyah
Karachi.

Thursday,
12th Jumadiul awwal 1396AH

## FOREWORD

(Mufti Muḥammad Shafi رحمة الله عليه)

Through his grace and mercy, Allah favoured and enabled me to be of service to the Qur'an by writing the *Ma'arif ul- Qur'an*. And, it gives me pleasure to learn that Muslims do derive benefit from it. When the first volume was reviewed and revised, I wished that a thesis should be included as an introduction to the sciences of Qur'ān but illness coupled with weakness prevented me from undertaking the task and I entrusted the task to my dear son, Muḥammad Taqi. He wrote down a brief introduction of the subject for the *Ma'arif ul Qur'an*. Simultaneously, however, he took up writing on the subject exhaustively which is now before us as *Uloom ul-Qur'ān*(An approach to the Quranic Sciences)

This is a vast knowledge. Many volumnous books are written on the subject in Arabic, and quite a number have been published in Urdu, too. There was, nevertheless, scope for a book that would deal with related discourses in detail and ward off the misgivings created by the orientalists and atheists. It was also necessary to bring to light the principles of *Tafseer* (exegesis) especially because, recently, many people have begun to compose commentaries on the Qur'an even though they are ill-equipped for the task and do not possess the requisite knowledge. These people should be warned of the dangers of their rash undertakings which might mislead other people.

We thank Allah that this book has tackled the problem better than I had expected. And , I am confident that if it is read with a quest for truth and a fair outlook, Insha Allah it will provide insight into the science of exegisis and remove doubts that are created in the mind by misleading suggestions of the orientalists and false fables

common among the laymen.

The truth is that I had entrusted this task to my son because of my illness and weakness on the understanding that what a father leaves incomplete, the son completes it. But, when the book was before me and, al-though I could not read it myself because of poor eyesight, my happiness knew no bounds when passages were read to me and I thank Allah deeply for this. If I had chosen to write on the subject when I was healthy, I could not have written as well as my son has done. There are two reasons for that. The first is that I could never have gone through the large number of books that son has consulted for the writing of the present book. Only a cursory glance at the numerous references to sources in the footnotes with their chapters and page numbers will disclose the amount of research he has undertaken.

The second reason is that my lack of knowledge of English kept me unaware of the poison spread by the orientalists against the teachings of Qur'an. My son who is a graduate with distinction in M.A.(English) and LLB could detect their mischief and give a befitting answer.

I pray to Allah from the core of my heart that He keep this light of my eyes safe, give him a long life and protect him from all mischief and trial! May He enable him to serve religion with greater enthusiasm and grant him truthfulness, sincerity and Your pleasure! May He grant approval to this work and make it a means of salvation for him and for me and let Muslims benefit from it to a great extent!

وَعَلَى اللهِ الْمُسْتَعَانُ وَعَلَيْهِ التُّكْلَانُ

And Allah is the one who helps and on Him is reliance placed.

*Mufti Muḥammad Shafi*
(may Allah forgive him)
Dar ul-Uloom, Karachi

1st Jumadi al-Thani 1396AH

## INTRODUCTION

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَكَفٰى وَسَلَامٌ عَلٰى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى

Praise belongs to Allah who suffices. And peace be on His chosen slaves.

The Qur'ān is a blessing of Allah for all mankind. No amount of worldly wealth can replace it. It is that piece of cure which brings blessings in both the worlds through its recital, just looking at it, listening to it or reading over to others, learning it or teaching it, practicing its commands and propagating and diffusing its teachings in any manner whatever.

A Hadith is transmitted in *Saḥeeḥ Muslim* as narrated by Sayyidina Uqbah Ibn 'Aamir ﷺ they were seated one day at Suffah when the Prophet ﷺ came to them and said, "Does any of you love that he should go every morning to the market of) Buṭḥān or Aqeeq and bring two she-camels of the best kind without committing a sin or severing ties of relationship?" They said, "O Messenger of Allah, every one of us would like to do that. "So, he said, "If anyone goes to the Mosque everyday and learns two verses (of the Qur'ān) or recites them then, that is better for him than two she-camels. And, if he learns three verses, that is better than three she-camels, and learning four verses is better than four she-camels."

This Hadith is just one example of the encouragement that the Prophet ﷺ gave to his *ummah* to recite the Quran to interpret its Message, to put it into practice and to diffuse its knowledge worldwide. The books of Ahadith are full with other Ahadith of the same Message. This is why the *ummah* has done great service to the Qur'an and

its sciences and made extraordinary efforts to preserve its words and meanings. If we probe into these efforts, we are held spellbound.

Efforts to understand and interpret the Qurān are one thing, the *ummah* has left no stone unturned to learn and preserve correct pronounciation and delivery of its words and the diactrical marks over its letters. They have founded a science of this subject and we do not find an example of that in any other language or religion of the world. Take the science of *Tajweed* alone. Whole libraries are found on the subject of correct reading of the Qur'an.

In short, of the many ways in which service is rendered to the Qurān, one is through the books on the sciences of the Qurān.

This is a vast knowledge and it underlines the principles and basis of exegesis. It tells us , how the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, the reality of *waḥy*, the sequence of revelation, the period during which the whole of it was revealed, the distinction of Makkan and Madinan surahs, background of revelation and how it helps in interpreting the Qur'an, the abrogated verses of the Qurān. Meaning of many letters and many Recital of Qurān, its subjects, manner in which Allah has preserved it, the stages which its writing and printing has gone through, principles and manners of exegesis, correct way to understand it and the errors that could mislead anyone. Many other similar questions are answered in the books of *Uloom al Qur'an*.

There are books on this subject in Arabic. They include: *al Burhan fi uloom il Qur'an*, 4 vols. By 'Allamah Zakashī, *al Itqān*, 2 vols. by Allamah Suyūti. *Manahil al Irfan*, 2 vols. By Shaikh Zarqāni. These books are well-known and reliable to this day and serve as source for subsequent works and study. There are innumerable

books in Urdu ,too that cover this topic. The most comprehensive and distinctive is *al Bayan fi uloom il Qur'an* by Abdul Ḥaq Haqqaniرحمة الله عليه .

However , in different times the requirements also differ. With the influence of western thought and ideas, fresh question came to be raised and had to be answered. The subject had to be dealt with from a new angle. For a long time it was felt that another book should be written with a fresh approach but I had not an iota of idea that I would have some part in it.

This honour seemed to be written for me. The background of the story is that my respected father Mawlana Mufti Muḥammad Shafi رحمة الله عليه wrote the Urdu exegesis of the Qur'an, *Ma'arif ul Qur'an* which is published in eight volumes. We can say without the least hesitancy that it is an unmatched urdu *Tafseer* on the pattern of the righteous predecessors for the modern times. And Allah granted it immense approval, when the second edition was about to be printed. My respected father commanded me to write down an introduction to it on the important points of the sciences of the Qurān.

I began to write it down in obedience to him and while I was writing it down the earlier wish arose in me again and the introduction became lengthy in spite of my efforts to shorten it. When the manuscript crossed two hundred pages, I realized that that was too lengthy an introduction for the *Tafseer*, and many important points had yet not been touched!. So, on the advice of my respected father, I summarized the introduction for the *Tafseer* and it was published with that. The lengthier work became part of a separate book by itself. However, my engagement in other tasks caused a delay in completing the book. When it was ready, I had included in it almost all the material I had in mind for the book.

While I cannot yet say it the book has everything that is necessary for the present times, yet I have full hope in Allah that as far as the subject is concerned, it includes much of what we need to teach today. I have had to consult many books to collect together the answers to many known questions and to include fresh ones. If they meet the approval of the learned then it is merely a favour of Allah , otherwise, I have the satisfaction of at least having initiated an effort for other scholars to complete it. If it helps anyone in understanding the Quran, I will have received my reward in full.

I request readers to pray that Allah grant approval to my humble effort and let it be an asset for me in the hereafter. Aameen.

وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِیْ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِیِّ الْعَظِيْمِ

And only Allah is the One who enables, the Exalted, the Magnificent!.

*Muḥammad Taqi Usmani*
Dar Ul Uloom, Karachi

29 Jumadi al Awwel, 1396 A.H.

## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## THE NAME QURĀN AND THE REASON FOR IT

[1]'Allāmah Abul Ma'āli has listed 55 names of the [2]Holy Qurān. Some scholars have counted them to be more than 90, but the fact is that they have reached these numbers by considering the various attributes of the Qurān as its names. But actually the names of the Qurān are limited only to five names viz.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. AL-QURĀN | The Reading |
| 2. AL-FURQĀN | The Criterion |
| 3. AZ-ZIKR | The Advice |
| 4. AL-KITĀB | The Book |
| 5. [3]AT-TANZEEL | The Revelation |

The Holy Qurān itself has used these five words as its proper[4] names. Of these the most popular name is "Qurān,"

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1. Abul Ma'āli (ma'āli's father), real name was 'Azizy bin 'Abdul Malik and shaydhlah was the Title, was a Shafa'ī scholar in the fifth century Hijri, died in 494. AH. 'Aallamah Zarkashy and Suyūti have quoted his book "Al-Burhān-fi-Mushkilātil Qur'an: at numerous occassions.
2. See "Al-Itqān fi 'Uloom il Qurān" by Allama Suyūti, v.1, p51, Cairo edition. 1368 H.
3. See "Manhil-al-'Irfān", by Zarqāni, v.1, p2. Printed at 'Īsa-al-bābi Al-Halbi 1372 AH.
4. For Al-Furqān see Q:3:1, for Az-Zikr Q:3:58, 14:6, 18: etc., for Al-Kitāb Q 2:1, 16:64, 89 etc. for Al-Tanzeel, Q 26:5, 56:80, 69:69 etc.

so Allah Himself has called it with this name in not less than [5]sixty-one places.

The word Qurān is derived from *Qara'a Yaqra'u* (قرأ يقرأ) which literally [6]means. "To collect" but later on this word came to be used for "Reading" because the words and letters are collected together while reading something. The masdar or verbal noun is قراءة and قرءان. Allah says:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ

Surely upon Us rests the collecting thereof, and the reciting thereof. (al-Qiyamah, 75:17)

Also, in Arabic language sometimes verbal noun is used in the meaning of its passive participle. The Qurān is so named in the same sense, that is, [7]"The Book that is read".

Various reasons have been advanced for giving it the name, Qurān. It seems more appropriate that this name has been given to the Book of Allah to refute the unbelievers of Arabia, because they used to say,

لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ

Listen not to this Qurān, but boo loudly during its recital. (Fussilat, 41:26)

Thus by giving it the name "Qurān", has been proclaimed that its Message cannot be suppressed by such ridiculous means. The Book is revealed to be read and it

5. For reference please see, Fathur Rahman-li-Ṭālib Ayāt li Qur'ān by 'Ilmi Zadah al-Ḥasani, pp 358, 359, Al-Ahliya Press, Beirut. 1223 AH.
6. "Al-Mufradāt fi Gharīb al-Qurān" by Raghib Isphahani, P. 411, printed at Asḥal Maṭābi', Karachi 1380 AH.
7. There are several other views regarding the origin of this word, but they are not free of doubts. For details see, al-Itqān, v.1, p52, and Manā-hil-al-Irfān v.1, p7.

shall be read till the Last Day.

Hence it is now an established fact that the Holy Qurān is the most widely read Book in the world.

However, the conventional definition of "Qurān" has been made in the following words:

المنزل على الرسول المكتوب فى المصاحف المنقول الينا نقلاً متواترا بلا شبهة.

The words of Allah that were revealed to His Messenger ﷺ, wrtten in Books and narrated continuously fromhim wih out any doubt.[8]

This definition is unanimously accepted by all the learned scholars without any difference of opinion.

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8. at-Talweeḥ maʿ al-Tawḍeeh, v.1, p26, printed at Mustafa Press al-babi, Egypt.

# FACTS ABOUT *WAḤY*

## (DIVINE REVELATION)

Since the Qurān has been sent down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through Divine revelations or "*Waḥy*"(وحی), it is necessary at the outset to know certain things about "*Wahy*".

## NEED FOR *WAHY*

Every Muslim knows that Allah has sent Man in this world for trial, and, after assigning certain duties to him, the entire universe has been placed at his service. Hence two things become imperative for Man to do after he has come to this world. First, he must make use of the Universe around him in the right manner, and secondly while using these things he must keep in view the Commandments of Allah and do nothing against His will.

For both these things he needs "knowledge". Unless he knows the reality of this universe and the uses of things present therein, and the way he can make use of them, he cannot get any benefit out of them. Further; it will be impossible for him to live in accordance with the pleasure of Allah unless he knows what He likes, and what He does not like.

Thus, when Allah created Man, He complemented his creation with three such things as give him knowledge of the foregoing. For this purpose, along with human beings, He, Allah, also created three other things through which they would come to know about this. First, the five sense organs, i.e. eyes, ears, nose, mouth and limbs; secondly, the faculty of reasoning, intellect or wisdom; and thirdly,

the Divine revelation or *Waḥy*. Hence a man learns many things through his senses and many more through his intellect. Those that cannot be learnt through these two media are brought to his knowledge through *Waḥy*. (Divine Revelation).

The three sources of knowledge are so arranged that each one of them has a definite range and fixed sphere of activity beyond which it does not work. Hence those things that a man learns through his senses cannot be perceived through reason alone. For example, if a man is sitting in front of me I know through my eyes that he is a human being. My eyes also tell me that he is fair coloured, has a broad forehead, black hair, thin lips and oval face. But if I do not use my sensory faculties keeping my eyes closed and rely on my mental abilities alone to know the colour and structural built of this man, it will be impossible.

Similarly, things that are learnt through intellect cannot be perceived by the senses alone; For example, I know about that same person that he has a mother, and also that he has been created by Someone, even though neither is his mother present before me nor can I see his Creator, but my intellect tells me that this person could not be born by himself. If, however, I want to have this knowledge through my eyes rather than intellect, it would be impossible because the scene of his creation and birth cannot come before my eyes.

Thus, as far as the five senses are concerned, our intellect does not give us any guidance but its activity starts from where the scope of the senses ends. But even the scope of intellectual faculties is not limitless; it ends at a certain point, And there are many things which cannot be known either by senses or by intellect. Taking the example of this same person, our intellect told us who created him, but why was he created, what duties have been assigned to

him by the Creator, which of his deeds are liked by Allah and which are disliked, are questions which cannot be answered even jointly by the senses and intellect. It is the channel by Allah to provide answer to such questions that is known as "*Waḥy*"(Divine Revelations), which is revealed to a selected person appointed as His Messenger whom His discourses are revealed. "*Waḥy*" is the highest source of knowledge that provides answers to questions related to his life and which be solved through his senses or intellect, he must have answers to these questions.

This also clarifies that intellect and observation alone are not sufficient for the guidance of man but the need of "*Waḥy*" is an inescapable requirement for his guidance. Since the need of "*Waḥy*" is felt, where mental faculties fail to provide guidance. Human intellect may not neassarily comprehend everything related to *Waḥy*. Just as perception of colour of a thing not within the scope of intellect but it is done by senses, Similarly transmission of knowledge about many religious beliefs is the function of *Wahy* and it will not be wise to rely upon intellect alone for this perception.[9]

## MEANING OF *WAḤY*

Keeping in view the above introduction, ponder over the substance and reality of "*Waḥy*". وحی and ایحاء are Arabic words and their meanings in dictionaries have been described as "To signify something quickly", whether by way of enigma or metaphor, by way of a meaningless sound, by moving a part of the body, or by way of

9. Only brief hints have been made here about the need for "waḥy" For a detailed discussion on this subject please consult, "Introduction by Abi Shakoor Salimi (p3-72) and" 'Uloom-ul-Qurān" by Mawlana Shamsul Ḥaq Afghani p3-18, published by Idara Madrasah Farooquiyah Bahawalpur 1389AH.

inscriptions and writings. These words apply in all these situations.[10] Thus, the Holy Qurān uses the word in the same meaning while describing the incident of Zakariyya (zachria):

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا

So he went forth to his people from the sanctuary, then he beckoned to them "Glorify (your Lord) morning and evening". (Surah Maryam, 19:11)

Evidently such gestures are meant to infuse something in the heart of one's audience. The word Waḥy and Ī-ḥā 'un therefore, began to be used in this meaning. In a number of verses of the Holy Qurān this very meaning is intended. For example,

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا

"And your Lord revealed to the bee (saying): "Build your homes in the mountains..." (An-Naḥl, 16:68)

So much so that the word has been used in The Qurān even for the suggestions inspired by the devils,

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ

And thus did We appoint to every Prophet an enemy-states of men and jinn, inspiring one another with gilded speech... (Al-An'ām, 6:112)

And also,

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10: Az-Zubaydi, Taj ul-'urūs v.l, p384 Dar ul Libya, Banghāzi 1386 AH. Ar-Rāghib: al-Mufradāt.

وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ

And certianly the satans are ever inspiring their friends to dispute with you. (Al-An'ām, 6:121)

And Allah had addressed the angels again with word Ī-hā'un.

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ

(Recall), when your Lord, (O Prophet), inspired the angels (saying), "I am with you..." (Al-Anfāl, 8:12)

Anything that Allah prompts into the heart of those other than Prophets is also expressed by the same word

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ

And We revealed to Mūsā's mother saying, "Suckle him..." (Al-Qasas, 28:7)

But these are literal expressions of this word. In religious terminology, however,[11] "*Waḥy*" is defined as,

كَلَامُ اللّٰهِ الْمُنَزَّلُ عَلٰى نَبِيٍّ مِنْ أَنْبِيَائِهِ۔

"The Words of Allah that are sent down to any of His Prophets".

It must be borne in mind that the word "*Waḥy*" has come to be used in this sense to such an extent that its application to anyone other than a Prophet is not proper. 'Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمة الله عليه has stated that *Waḥy.un* and *Ī-Ha-ūn* are two different words and there is a minor distinction in the meaning of the two words. *I-Ha'un*' has a general application, and apart from denoting

11: 'Umdatul Qari Li-Sharah Saḥiḥi Bukhārī v.1, p18, Dārut Ṭaba-al-Āmirah Istanbul 1308 A.H.'

Revelations to the Prophets it includes gestures and inspirations to any one other than a Prophet as well. Thus the word is used for both Prophets and other persons. Contrary to this, Waḥy is applied to Divive inspiration sent down to Prophets only. The Holy Qur'ān has also used the word "Īḥā" for both Prophets and other human beings, but the word *Waḥy* has not been used for anyone except the[12] Prophets.

Thus, *Waḥy* is the channel through which Allah sends down His words to any of His chosen servant and Messenger, and through this Messenger to all other human beings. And since *Waḥy* is a sacred instructive link between Allah and His servants and is perceived by the Prophets عليهم السلام only, its true cognition is not possible for human beings. However, the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic Traditions) have imparted some knowledge about its kinds and perceptions, and only those can be described here.

## TEACHINGS OF *WAḤY*

By means of *Waḥy* people are taught those things which they cannot learn from their senses and intellect alone. These things may be purely of religious nature, or may belong to common needs of the world. The *Waḥy* of the Prophets generally belongs to the first category, but when needed, instructions about mundane affairs have also been imparted through *Waḥy*. For example Nooh ﷺ was commanded to construct the Ark in these words:

وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا

And make the Ark under Our eyes and Our revelation.

(Hūd, 11:37)

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12: Faiḍul Bāri v1, p19, Mat-bah Ḥijazi, Cairo 1357 AH by Maulana Answar Shah Kashmiri.

This tells that the art of making Ark or ship building was taught to him by means of *Waḥy*. Similarly Dawood ﷺ was taught the art of making armour. Also Adam ﷺ was taught the peculiarities of things through *Waḥy*, and according to one narration basic knowledge of medical science was also sent down through [13]*Waḥy*.

## KINDS OF *WAḤY*

'Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمة الله عليه has stated that basically there are three kinds of [14]*Waḥy*.

### 1: *WAḤY* AT HEART

This kind of *Waḥy* is directed to the heart of a Prophet and Allah inspires something into it. In this there is no medium of angel or hearing faculty or other senses of the Prophet. He does not hear any voice but something is infused into the depths of his heart, and he knows that it has come from Almighty Allah. This may happen in sleep or wakefulness. Hence every dream and vision of the Prophet is also a *Waḥy* Sayyidina Ibrāhim ﷺ was commanded in this manner to slaughter his son.

### 2: DIRECT DISCOURSE FROM ALLAH

In this kind of *Waḥy* Allah directly speaks to the Prophet and there is no interlink with an angel but the Prophet does hear the voice. This voice is entirely different from that of any of His creation and imparts a strange sensation, the cognition of which is not possible through intellect. Only the Prophets who hear this voice can

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13: Abdul 'Aziz Far Hari: al Nabras Ali Sharaḥ-al-'Aqāid pp427, 428, printed Amritsar 1318 A'H.

14: The three kinds are derived from his book, "Faidhul Bari" pp14-18. The nomenclature, classification and explanations are our own interpretations.

recognise the state and ecstatic feeling it imparts.

Since in this kind of *Waḥy* the Prophets get the honour of direct conversation with Allah, this kind is regarded as most superior and [15]honorific. That is why in describing the high status of Musa (Moses) عليه السلام, the Quran States.

وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا

And to Musa, Allah spoke directly. (An-Nisa,4169)

## 3: ANGELIC *WAḤY*

In this kind, Allah sends His message to the Prophet through an angel, and that angel conveys it to the Prophet. Sometimes the angel is not visible but only his voice is heard, and sometimes he comes in a human figure and conveys the message, and sometimes he is seen by the Prophet in his original form but this happens only rarely.

The Holy Quran has pointed to the three kinds of "*Waḥy*" in the following verse.

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ
أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ

And it is not (vouchsafed) to a mortal that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or that He sends a Messenger to reveal whatsoever He will by His leave. (Ash-Shura, 42:51)

In this verse, inspiration is *Waḥy at heart*, *behind the veil* means direct discourse and by *sending a message* is meant angelic *Waḥy*.

15 Madārij-ul. sālikeen v1, p37 by Ibnul Qayyim Matba'tus Sunnatil Muḥammadiyah, Makkah Mukarramah 1357 AH.

## METHODS OF *WAḤY* ON THE HOLY PROPHET ﷺ

*Waḥy* was sent down to the Holy Prophet ﷺ through different means. According to Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہا as narrated in Saḥiḥ Bukhārī Ḥārith bin Hishām ؓ[16] once asked the Prophet ﷺ about the manner of *Waḥy* sent to him. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

أَحْيَانًا يَأْتِينِي مِثْلُ صَلْصَلَةِ الْجَرَسِ وَهُوَ أَشَدُّهُ عَلَيَّ فَيَفْصِمُ عَنِّي وَقَدْ وَعَيْتُ مَا قَالَ وَأَحْيَانًا يَتَمَثَّلُ لِيَ الْمَلَكُ رَجُلاً

(صحیح بخاری، ص۲، ج۱، اصح المطابع)

> Sometimes I hear the voice like that of ringing bells, and I find this kind of *Waḥy* the hardest when this state ends all that the voice had said is retained in my memory, and sometimes the angel comes to me in the guise of a man.
>
> (Saḥīḥ Bukhārī p.2. v.1, Asaḥ-ḥul Matabe, Karachi.)

From this Tradition we know of two methods of *Waḥy* on the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

### 1. RINGING OF BELLS

The first method was that he used to hear a sound similar to the ringing of bells. Since the Tradition mentions only this much, we cannot say with certainty in what sense this kind of *Waḥy* has been similar to the sound of bells. However, some scholars think that it was the voice of the angels while some others think that it was the flutter of its wings while bringing down the *Waḥy*. Allamah Khaṭṭābī is of the opinion that the similarity does not relate to the tune of the sound but its

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16. Ḥārith bin Hishām is one of renowned Companion. He accepted Islam at the Conquest of Makkah and was martyred at the battle of Syria in 15 AH. Al Qastalānī Irshād-us-Sārī v.1, p57 Makkah Boolaq-the-Miṣr 1323 AH.

continuity. Just as the sound of a ringing bell is continuous and it does not break, the sound of *Waḥy* was also continuous.[17] But these are all hypothetical views and nothing can be said with certainty on the basis of these views. However, the explanation given by Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri qouting Hadhrat Moḥiuddin Ibn ʻArabi is more subtle than all the others. He states that the simile has been used in two respects. First it pertains to continuity of the sound as stated above, and secondly in so far as it is difficult to ascertain the direction of the sound of a bell continuously ringing as it appears to be coming from all directions. Since Allah is independent of place and directions, His words are heard from all directions. The exact perception of this state is not possible without actual observation but the Holy Prophet ﷺ used the simile of ringing bells to bring it as near common understanding as possible.[18]

Anyhow the exact nature of the voice is known to Allah or to His Messenger. From the *Ḥadith* we only learn that in this particular type of *Waḥy*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to hear a voice resembling the sound of bells. We also learn that this method of *Waḥy* used to be the hardest on him.

According to Ḥafiz Ibn Ḥajar رحمة الله عليه the words وَهُوَ أشده عليّ "And it is hardest on me" denote that in fact all types of *Waḥy* were hard on the Prophet ﷺ but this particular type used to be hardest on him. The reason is that it is necessary that there be some sort of harmony between the speaker and the listener. Now, if the angel came in human form that was not an extraordinary burden on the Prophet ﷺ. Only the majestic burden of the words of Allah used to be there. On the other hand, if the angel did not come in human form but either his voice or directly the words of Allah were heard,

17. Ḥafiz Ibn Ḥajar, Fataḥul Bārī, V.1 p16, Al Matbaʻ al-Baḥiya 1348A.H.

18. Faiḍ-ul-Bārī v1, p19, 20 Cairo 1357.

that was an extraordinary state and to get familiar with it and to get the benefits from it, the Holy Prophet ﷺ felt much greater burden. [19]Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی الله تعالی عنها added her own observation to the foregoing *Hadith*:

وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِ الْوَحْيُ فِي الْيَوْمِ الشَّدِيْدِالْبَرْدِ فَيَفْصِمُ عَنْهُ وَإِنَّ جَبِيْنَهُ لَيَتَفَصَّدُ عَرَقاً (صحیح بخاری، ص۲، ج۱، حدیث رقم۲)

I have observed the state of *Waḥy* on him during severe cold and yet his forehead used to be drenched with Sweat.[20]

In another narration Sayyidah 'Āishah رضی الله تعالی عنها said, Whenever *Waḥy* came to him his breathing became difficult, his face turned pale like the twig of date-palm, his front teeth began to clatter with cold and he used to sweat so much that its drops rolled down like beads.[21]

This state of *Waḥy* was sometimes so intense that the animal on whom he rode could not stand the weight and would sit down.

Once he was resting with his head on the thigh of Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ when *Waḥy* began to come, and it caused much pressure on his thigh that Sayyidina Zayd ﷺ thought it would crush down.[22]

In one narration of Musnad Aḥmad the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself said that in this form of *Waḥy* he feels as if his soul was being squeezed out.[23]

Sometimes a faint sound of this *Waḥy* was heard by other

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19. Faiḍ-ul-Bārī p19, 20 v.1 Cairo 1357 AH.

20 Saḥīḥ Bukhārī, v1.p 2. Ḥadith No.2.

21. Al-Itqān vl:1p46, Cairo 1368 by Suyuti, ref Ibn Sa'eed.

22. Zād-ul-Ma'ād Fi Khair 'Ibad by Ibnul Qayyim v1, pp18-19 Al-Matba Al-Yamaniyyah Egypt.

23. Al-FatḥurRabbāni (from Musnad Ahmad), reference 'Abdullah bin 'Amr ﷺ v20, p211, Kitabus seerah Nabaviyah, *Ḥadith* No, 42, Cairo 1375 AH.

people as well. 'Umar ﷺ said that a sound similar to humming of bees was heard near his face at the time of descent of *Waḥy*.[24]

## 2. ANGEL COMING IN HUMAN GUISE

The other method of *Waḥy* mentioned in this tradition was that the angel used to appear in a human form and convey the message. In such a situation, generally Jibrīl ﷺ came in the form of the renowned companion Diḥyah Kalbī ﷺ Allama 'Ainy رحمة الله عليه states that the selection of Diḥyah Kalbī ﷺ was probably because he was the most handsome person of his time. He was so beautiful that he used to wrap a cloth round his face when coming out.[25]

However, it is mentioned that sometimes Jibril ﷺ came in other appearances too. In the narration of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ he is said to have come as a total stranger,[26] because it was probably intended that the people be taken by surprise when they find him talking informally to the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

However, it is agreed almost unanimously that the angel who brought *Waḥy* to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was Jibril ﷺ, the Qurān says:

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيْلَ فَإِنَّهٗ نَزَّلَهٗ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ

say (O Prophet) Whoever is an enemy of Jibril ﷺ (he is an enemy of Allah) for surely he is the one who has revealed it to your heart... (Al-Baqarah, 2:97)

From this it becomes apparent that *Waḥy* was generally brought to the Holy Prophet ﷺ by Jibril ﷺ. However Imam Aḥmad رحمة الله عليه has quoted Imam Sha'abi رحمة الله عليه that during the first three years of Prophethood [27]Israfil

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24. Same as at 23. v20, p212.
25. 'Umdatul Qāri by Al-'Ainy v1, p47, Istanbul 1308 AH.
26. Mishkātul Maṣābīḥ vl 1 p11 .Aṣahul Maṭāb'a, Karachi.
27. Al-Itqān vl, p46 Awal Qasṭalānī, Irshād Sārī v1, p59.

ﷺ used to bring *Wahy* but the Qurān was not revealed through him. It was entirely brought by Jibril ﷺ. But Allama Wāqidi رحمة الله عليه and others have rejected this view and maintained that no angel other than Jibril ﷺ brought any *Waḥy* to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. 'Allāmah Badaruddin 'Ayni' also seems to be inclined to the same view,[28] and we also do not find support for this view in any authentic *Ḥadith* or saying of companions. Ḥafiz Ibn Ḥajar is, however, inclined to accept this view and places the incidence during the period of fatrah;[29] (the period of about three years after the first *Waḥy* during which no portion of the Qurān was revealed).

Anyhow, in this manner of *Waḥy* the angel used to come in human form and in this the Prophet ﷺ did not experience much hardship. In one of the narrations in Saḥiḥ Abu 'Awanah it is stated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُهُ عَلَيَّ

And this state was the easiest for me.[30]

In the narration of Sayyidah Aishah رضى الله تعالى عنها only these two methods of the descent of *Wahy* are mentioned. But from other traditions we come to know of several other methods also. [31]Allama Ḥalimi has mentioned as many as 46 ways of descent of [32]*Waḥy*. But Ḥafiz Ibn Ḥajar has stated that Ḥalimi has counted the various attributes of Jibril ﷺ as the methods of descent of *Waḥy* to reach the

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28. Umdatul Qāri, v1 pp47-48.
29. Fathul Bāri, v1, pp 22-23.
30. Al-Itqān, vl. p46.
31. Abu 'Abdulllah Ḥusain bin Al-Ḥasan Al-Ḥalimi Al-Jurjani (died 403 AH) whose book Al-Minhaj is a comprehensive book on principles of Religion.
32. Fatah al-Bari v.1, p16 Ḥafiz Ibn Ḥajir.

figure of 46, otherwise the number is not that high.[33]

However, other important ways of descent of *Wahy* as mentioned in other Prophetic traditions, are as follows:

## 3. ANGEL COMING IN HIS ORIGINAL APPEARANCE

The third method of *Wahy* was that Jibril ﷺ came in his original appearance but this had happened only three times in the lifetime of Holy Prophet ﷺ. First, when he himself wished to see the angel in his original form, secondly, at the time of Ascension of the Prophet ﷺ to Heavens, and the third time in the very early days after the Prophethood at Ajyād in Makkah. The first two sightings are authentic but the last one is doubtful.[34]

## 4. TRUE DREAMS

The fourth method of *Wahy* was that the Prophet ﷺ used to have dreams before the revelation of the Quran had started. Whatever he saw in a dream happened in exactly the same manner when he awoke. Sayyidah Aishah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا says:

اَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهٖ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ اَلرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِىْ النَّوْمِ فَكَانَ لَا يَرىٰ رُؤْيَا اِلَّا جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ۔ (صحیح بخاری، ص۲، ج۱، حدیث رقم ۳)

The initial *Wahy* on the Holy Prophet ﷺ was through true dreams. Whatever he dreamt always came out true like the morning light.[35]

Also, when a hypocrite of Madinah had performed a

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33. Fatah al-Bari v 1, p18,19.
34. Fatah al-Bari v 1, p18,19.
35. Sahih Bukhari v 1, p2 *Hadith* No.3.

spell on him, it was in his dream that he was informed of it and also of the method of breaking the spell.[36]

## 5. DISCOURSE WITH *ALLAH*

Like Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ also had the privilege of direct discourse with Allah. While awake this happened only on the night of Ascension. Apart from this he once had a direct talk with Allah in dream.[37]

## 6. INSPIRATION IN THE HEART

The sixth method of *Waḥy* was that, without appearing before him in any Shape, Jibril عليه السلام used to inspire something in the heart of the Prophet ﷺ In one narration the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إِنَّ رُوْحَ الْقُدُسِ نَفَثَ فِيْ رَوْعِيْ ............الخ

The Holy spirit (Jibril عليه السلام) inspired this in my heart.[38]

And the words of the narration of Mustadrak-Ḥākim are:

ان جبرئيل عليه السلام القى فى روعى ان احدا منكم لن يخرج من الدنيا حتى يتكمل رزقه ـ

(الحاكم، المستدرك، كتاب البيوع، ص ٤، ج ٢، دائرة المعارف، دكن، ١٣٤٠ھ)

Jibril عليه السلام infused in my heart that none of you would depart from this world until he has earned all his subsistence.[39]

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36. Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Bab-ul-Saḥr, chapter Tib v.2, pp857, 858.
37. Al-Itqān v.1, p46.
38. Al-Itqān, v.1, p46.
39. Al-Ḥākim, Al-Mustadrak, Kitābul Buyū', v2, p4, Daira-tul-Ma'ā-rif Daccan. 1340 AH.

## *WAḤY, KASHF* AND *ILHĀM*

It has been explained above that *Waḥy* is specific for the Prophets ﷺ and any other person, irrespective of his spiritual status, cannot be a recipient of *Waḥy*. However, sometimes Allah does tell certain things to some of His selected servants. This is known as *Kashf* or *Ilham* each of which is a form of inspiration. Mujaddid Alf Thani رحمة الله عليه has stated the difference between the two is that *Kashf* relates to sensory abilities, that is, an incidence or a thing is directly visible, and *Ilham* relates to intuitive knowledge where nothing is seen but some thought is infused in the heart. That is why generally *Ilham* is more correct than *Kashf*. [40]

The last method of the descent of *Waḥy*, that is, inspiration in the heart is apparently very near to *Ilham*. In both of them something is infused in the heart, but the difference between the two is that inspiration of *Waḥy* is done only to a Prophet and he also gets to know who inspired him, as is the case in the above narration of Ḥākim where the Holy Prophet said, Jibril ﷺ infused this in my heart ... But in *Ilham* a person does not know who inspired him. He only feels that something has come to his heart that was not there before.[41]

On this basis the *Waḥy* of the Prophets is absolutely certain and must be the obeyed. But the inspiration (*Ilham*) of the saints is not a certain thing hence they form neither an argument in matters of faith nor do they become obligatory. In fact if one gets an inspiration or dream that is not in accordance with the Universally known injunctions of the Qurān and Traditions it is not considered permissible by any authority to act according to its directives.[42]

40. Fayd al-Bari v1, p19.
41: Al-Wahy Al-Muḥammadi p38, by Rashid Raza. Al-Minar Press. Egypt 1354 AH.
42: Ash-Shatbi رحمة الله عليه: AL-A'tisam v1, p351 fol. Al-manār, Cairo 1331 AH.

## QURĀNIC AND NON-QURĀNIC *WAḤY*

The *Waḥy* that was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was of two kinds. One, that comprised verses of the Qurān in which the words and meanings were both from Allah, and they have been preserved in the Qurān forever so that even an iota or dot has not changed nor can be changed. This type of *Wahy* is termed by religious scholars as *Waḥy Matluw* that is, the *Waḥy* that is recited (Qurānic). The second type of *Waḥy* is that which does not form part of Qurān, but a large number of commands and tenets have been sent through it. This type is known as non-Qurānic *Waḥy*, that is, the one that is not recited or *Waḥy Ghayr Matluw*. Generally, only the fundamental beliefs and basic teachings of Islam have been defined through *Waḥy Matluw*, i.e the Holy Qurān. Details of these teachings and subsidiary tenets have been sent through non-Qurānic *Waḥy*. This non-Qurānic *Waḥy* has been presreved in the form of Traditions (Sayings and Deeds) of the Holy Prophet termed as *Ḥadith*. Generally, in this type of *Waḥy* only the subject matter was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who then expressed it in his own [43]words. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

أُوْتِيْتُ الْقُرْاٰنَ وَمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ

I have been given the Qurān and with it also other similar teachings.

In this other techings refer to the non-Qurānic *Waḥy*.

As we have seen subsidiary details of Islamic laws have been given through this non-Qurānic *Waḥy*. Therefore, there are certain people who though they call themselves Muslims yet are intent upon leading a life free of

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43: Al-Itqān v1, p45.

restrictions imposed by Islamic laws. These people make the mischievous propaganda that there is nothing like non-Quranic *Waḥy* and say that the entire *Waḥy* sent to the Holy Prophet ﷺ is preserved in the Quran, and whatever commandments other than Quran he gave were in his capacity of the Head of State and were applicable only to the people of his time, and nowadays it is not obligatory to follow them.

But this idea is totally wrong and ill-founded. We learn from several verses of the Holy Quran itself that Divine Revelation (*Waḥy* from Allah) is not limited to the Quran alone, but there are many other things in addition to the Quran that have been taught through *Waḥy*. In support of this a few verses of Quran are cited below.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَّتَّبِعُ
الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبُ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ

> And We appointed not the *Qiblah* which you (O Prophet) have had except in order that We might know who followed the Messenger from him who turned back on his heels.. (Al-Baqarah, 2:143)

Every Muslim knows that for a considerable time in Madinah the Holy Prophet ﷺ observed *Salah* facing towards Baytal-Maqdis (Jerusalem), and the above verse was revealed when it was ordained to face *Ka'bah* again. This verse states that the previous order to face *Baytul-Maqdis* was test to know who obeys the order and who rejects it. It is noteworthy that the order to face *Baytul Maqdis* during worship has been attributed by Allah to Himself meaning thereby that He was the One Who had commanded His Messenger to the direction of *Baytul Maqdis*. But the command itself is not found anywhere in the Quran. It is clear that this order was given by Allah

through a *Waḥy* that is not part of the Qurān and which is not mentioned anywhere in the Qurān. It is this sort of *Waḥy* that is termed non-Quranic *Waḥy*.

فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَّفَ بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ

Then she informed about it (to the other) and Allah disclosed that to him, he had made known (to her) a part of it and passed over a part... (Al-Tahrim, 66:3)

This verse refers to an incident that one of the wives of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ hoped to conceal a certain thing from him, Allah revealed it to him through *Waḥy*. So, she asked him how he had come to know about it and he replied that it was the Knower and the One Everinformed who had revealed it to him. This verse clearly shows that the particular thing was revealed through *Waḥy* although we do not find it in the Qurān anywhere. Hence, he was informed of it though non-Qurānic *Waḥy*. There are many other verses that prove the non-Qurānic *Waḥy* but only two are mentioned here to avoid a lengthy discussion For the seeker of truth even two verses are more than sufficient to prove that non-Qurānic *Waḥy* too, is a kind of *Waḥy*, as definite and as binding as Qurānic *Waḥy*.

## INTELLECTUAL DOUBTS ABOUT *WAḤY*

The above discussion pertains to the essential information about *Waḥy* that are proved from the Qurān and *Ḥadith*. We have stated in the beginning that *Waḥy* is a form of guidance from Allah in matters that cannot be perceived by anyone other than the Prophets عليهم السلام it is not possible for others to have a true perception of the state and effect of *Waḥy*. That is why these things appear so unfamiliar and all those people who are overwhelmed by

the world-wide dominance of western thoughts. They look at things with doubts and disbelief. Some people even go to the extent of open denial of *Waḥy* believing it to be nothing but stories and tales. There are some who do not deny it openly but in this era of scientific advancement they feel shy of talking about it. It is necessary, therefore, to see the position of *Waḥy* vis-a-vis intelligence.

Before delving over the subject of *Waḥy* any further, we should first decide whether there is a Creator and Master of this universe or it came into existence all by itself? As for those materialists who deny the very existence of God, it will be futile to discuss this topic with them because a person who does not accept the existence of God will not think over the reality of *Waḥy* seriously. Therefore, we must first discuss with them the existence of God. But as for those who believe in the existence of God, it is not difficult for them to understand the intellectual need of *Waḥy* and its possibility and real existence.

If the universe has been created by the One and Only Omnipotent Being Who runs its well knit and organised system through His infinite wisdom, and Who has sent man in this world with a specific purpose, how then would it be possible for Him to leave him astray in darkness and not even tell him why he came into this world what his duties are, what is his ultimate goal, and how may he achieve that? Can anybody in his senses send forth his servant on an errand and not tell him the purpose of this journey when he starts, nor make it clear to him through any message afterwards as to what he is supposed to do or what his duties are during the course of his journey? When an ordinary human being cannot be expected to do so how can we say that for Almighty Allah Whose Infinite Wisdom is running the entire Universe. How is it possible that the All-knowing Who created such an amazing system of sun and moon, heavens and earth, stars

and planets, will not make any arrangement for establishing a channel to communicate to with His creatures to guide them about the purpose of their existence? If one believes in the All Comprehensive wisdom of Allah he must also admit that He has not left His creatures in darkness but has definitely established system for their guidance. It is this organised system of guidance that is known as *Waḥy* and Prophethood.

It should now be clear that *Waḥy* is not merely an article of faith but a religious belief, also a requirement of human mind, an intellectual requirement, the denial of which is in fact denial of the infinite Wisdom of Allah. As for the objection that the various methods of *Waḥy* are beyond our comprehension it is not a rational argument for not accepting the reality of *Waḥy*. The intellectual need and occurence of a thing proved by irrefutable arguments cannot be rejected merely because we have not directly observed it. If only a few centuries ago someone was told that people would be able to cover thousands of miles in a few hours by travelling in an aeroplane, he would have dismissed the idea as a fairy tale. But did his ignorance about aeroplanes made them any the less real? In many of the backward areas even today you will come across people who are not prepared to accept that man has landed on the moon. But does their denial disprove the reality? Talk to a villager about the computer system and tell him that it works like human brain, he will never believe you. But does that in any way affect the existence of computors? If the answer is "No" and certainly it is "No", then how can the *Waḥy*, the intellectual need of which is proven and undeniable, and which has been experienced by one hundred and twenty four thousand (1,24,000) of the most truthful persons, be rejected or disbelieved? And then after all where do these methods of *Waḥy* clash with reason? If with their limited brains Scientists could invent

such marvellous things as telephone, teleprinter, radio and television as means of communication, does Allah not have enough power to establish a surer and more powerful system of communication between Him and His servants than all these methods? (We seek the refuge of Allah for sayings like that).

The reality of *Waḥy* is just that Allah reveals His words to any of His Messenger directly or through some agency. The question is what intellectual reason bars its acceptance? We hesitate to cite the example of human inventions or action to help understand *Waḥy*, but just to clarify the point we are presenting here the example of a human action wherein someone captures the mind of another person and induces in him whatever thoughts he desires.

In the terminology of mystics (Saints) this action is called possession through the power of thought, or Thought Transfer. We find innumerable examples in the biographies of the mystics. Through the power of his imagination someone prevails over the mind of another person to the extent that he makes him speak and do act whatever he commands him. The materialists had been rejecting such power of dominance for a long time, and following them, many Muslims also thought it to be mere fiction, until the celebrated Swiss Physicist Mesmer born in the middle of 18th century, [44]selected human mind as the subject of his research, and in 1775 AD. disclosed in one of his articles that human mind can be subjugated through a magnetic process. He called this process as "Anima Magnetism" and,

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44: His full name is Fredric Anton Mesmer. He was born in a place near lake contance Switzerland in May 1733.AD. and died at Mersemberg in March 1815. Initially, he selected Medicine as his subject, but later he became known as inventor of Anima Magnetism, and "Mesmerism" is attributed to him (World Family Encyclopaedia v12, p3425, published Michigan, USA, 1957)

while in France, he also made successful practical experiment of this process but he could not fully convince his contemporaries. Then another person, James Braid, in 1842, in England, confirmed the validity of this process on a scientific basis and called it as Hypnotism.

There are different stages according to the Hypnotic Theory as propounded by James Braid. In the highest stage the entire muscular and nervous systems of the hypnotised person become paralysed and senseless and along with this the extrinsic and intrinsic sensations also become idle. But there is also an intermediate stage in which the body is not paralysed. This effect has been described in World Family Encyclopaedia as under:

> "If the hypnotic process is light, the hypnotised person remains capable of imagining, various objects, for example in such a semi-hypnotised state it is quite possible that he may believe himself to be a different person or he may begin to see certain things that are not there, or feel some extraordinary sensations, under suggestions by the hypnotiser because he becomes a subject to the commands of the latter."[45]

Even the materialists who did not believe in hypnotism were convinced after the research and experiments of James Braid, and today become a subject of great interest for western people. Hundreds of conjurers are making good money out of it. It is also being used to treat patients. The Thought Force which is known to Muslim mystics for hundreds of years which was generally brushed aside as superstition has now become a reality in the form of Hypnotism. And now even the so-called 'Rationalists,' for whom every discovery of the West is scientific and any

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45: The World Family Encyclopaedia 1957 v12, p3426.

extraordinary performance of Muslims a superstition, have come to accept it.

Anyhow, what is emphasised here is whether it is Mesmerism or Hypnotism, it is nothing but that one man prevails over the mind of the other and infuses his own thoughts into the mind of the other person. The question now arises that God who bestowed so much power to the imaginative faculty or hypnotism to man that he can possess the mind of another person for just ordinary purposes and sometimes just for nothing, does He not Himself possess the power and authority that He may prevail over or capture the mind and heart of His Messenger and reveal His words to them for the sake of guidance to mankind?

سُبْحَانَكَ هَٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ

Glory be to You (Allah!) this is a mighty calumny?

(Surah Nur, 24:16)

## DOES *WAHY* INCLUDE ONLY THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

In the preceding lines we have described that there are two kinds of *Waḥy*, Qurānic *Waḥy* and non-Qurānic *Waḥy*. In the latter kind, of course, only the subject matter used to be from Allah, but in order to express it the selection of words was left to the angel Jibril ﷵ or the Holy Prophet ﷺ. But it is not so with Qurān. Word for word, alongwith their meanings, the Qurān is the direct word of Allah in the literal sense. Just like its subject matters, its words, too, are exactly the same as they were revealed by Allah Himself. Angel Jibril ﷵ or the Holy Prophet ﷺ had no hand in their selection, arrangement or composition.

Some of those overawed by the objections of the

materialists about *Waḥy*, say these days that only the substance of the Qurān was sent through *Waḥy* which were comoposed in their own words (God forbid) by the Angel (Jibril ﷺ) or the Prophet ﷺ.

But this concept is totally false, absurd and against the convincing proofs of the Qurān and the *Ḥadith*.

There are several verses of the Qurān itself that clearly signify that its words and meanings were both revealed from Allah. Some of them are given below:

1: Qurān has descirbed one of its attributes as being "Arabic", that is, it has been revealed in Arabic language.[46] It is now obvious that if only the meanings of the Qurān were revealed its being "Arabic" انا انزلنه قرانا عربيا would have been meaningless because "Arabic" qualifies the words and not the meanings.

2: At several places in the Holy Qurān three principal duties of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been described. These are

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

who shall recite to them Your revelations, and shall teach them the Book and the wisdom, and shall purify them. (Al-Baqarah, 2:129)

It is clear that he was assigned two separate duties. First, recitation of the verses of Allah, and secondly, teaching their meanings. Obviously, recitation relates to words and not meanings, hence his first duty relates to the words of the Qurān and not to its meanings.

3: At many, places the Qurān has used for itself the

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46. see the Holy Qurān, Surah An-naḥl, 16:103, Ash-Shu'arā 26:195, Yusuf, 13:2, ṬaHa, 20:113, Ar-Ra'd, 14:39, Az-Zumar, 39:28, ḤaMim Sajdah 41:3, As-Shura, 42:7, Az-Zukhraf, 24:3.

word "*Al-Kitāb* (The Book)". The word "Book" does not relate to mental thoughts but only when these thoughts are transformed into words these may be called a "Book". This clearly proves that both the words and meanings of the Qurān have been revealed from Allah.

4: It is signified from *Sūrah al-Qiyāmah* that whenever, Jibrīl ﷺ came with *Waḥy* the Prophet ﷺ used to repeat the words hurriedly to memorize them. On this Allah Commanded him.

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ○ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ○
فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ○ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ○

(O Prophet) move not your tongue therewith to make haste with it (the learning of the Qurān). Surely upon Us rests the collecting thereof, and the reciting thereof. So, when We recite it follow you the reciting thereof. And surely upon Us then rests the explaining thereof.

(Al-Qiyāmah 75:16-19)

It is quite clear the words that Jibrīl ﷺ used to reveal to the Prophet were the words of Allah, that is why Allah took upon Himself the responsibility for all the three things—getting the words memorised, teaching recitation and explaining the meaning.

In the light of such clear proofs the concept that the words of Qurān were not revealed through *Waḥy* becomes quite absurd. While commenting on this subject Shaikh Muḥammad 'Abdul' 'Azeem Zarqānī has written the following:

"At this stage the gist of entire discussion is that it is unanimously agreed that both the words and meanings of the Qurān were revealed through *Waḥy*. And the popular

conception is that the same holds good about *Ḥadith Qudsi*" (Divine non-Qurānic inspirations beginning with the words "Allah said to me..."). However, as for the *Aḥādith* of the Prophet ﷺ only the meanings were revealed, but the words were his own. Then, as for such of his sayings as were not revealed to him but were his own thoughts, both the words and meanings were Prophetic traditions and not revealed through *Waḥy*."[47]

In fact those who have denied the words of the Qurān to be part of *Waḥy* have suffered from a confusion that arose because they were unable to understand the reality of revelation of words through *Waḥy*. But if the above discussion on the reality of *Waḥy*, its intellectual need and answers to the mental confusion are kept in view, all doubts and confusions are removed. If *Waḥy* is a definite requirement and Allah has full power to send it, how may it be said that He could reveal the meanings in the heart of the Prophet ﷺ but He is powerless (God forbid) to reveal the words?

It should also be clarified at this point that 'Allāmah Badruddin Zarkashi رحمة الله عليه and 'Allamah Suyuti رحمة الله عليه have also quoted some people's views that they thought that only the subject matters are from Allah while the words belong to the Prophet ﷺ or the [48]Angel Jibril ؑ. But you must have noted that in the light of the Qurān, *Sunnah*, and consensus of scholars, with strong arguments in them such views are baseless. Even the above authorities have not named the actual persons but have only mentioned, "Some people have

47: Manahil-ul-'Irfān Fi 'ulūmil Qurān vl.1, p44 Eisa-Al-babi Al-Ḥalabi. Egypt 1322 AH.

48: Al-Burhan Fi 'ulūm ul Qurān v1, p229, And Al-Itqān v1, p45.

said" 'Allāmah Suyūti رحمة الله عليه has categorically refuted them, hence such opinions cannot form the basis for this absurd belief.

**CHAPTER 2**

# HISTORY OF THE DESCENT OF THE QURĀN

The Qurān is in fact the word of Allah. Hence it is preserved in a Guarded Tablet as expressed in the Qurān itself.

بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ ○ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ ○

Nay, this is a Glorious Qurān, in the Guarded Tablet.

(Al-Burūj, 85:21-22)

Then from the Guraded Tablet it was sent down in two stages. First, it was sent as a whole to Bayt-ul'Izzat (The House of Honour) on the heaven of this world. Thereafter it was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ in bits according to the needs until it was completed in twentythree years. Two words have been used in the Qurān for its descent: انزال (Inzāl) and تنزيل (Tanzeel). The former means "to send down bit by bit". Hence wherever the Qurān has used the first word for itself it means the descent from the Guarded Tablet to the heaven of this world, eg.

إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُّبَارَكَةٍ

Surely, We have sent down it in a blessed night

(Ad-Dukhān, 44:3)

And wherever the second word is used it signifies the revelations made to the Holy Prophet ﷺ from time to time.

Allah has said:

وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَاهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلَىٰ مُكْثٍ وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا ○

And this is a Qurān that We sent down in piecemeal that you many recite it to mankind at intervals, and We have sent it down in gradual sending. (Al-Isrā, 17:106)

These two forms of descent of the Qurān are apparent from the verses itself. In addition to this Nasā'i, Ḥakim, Baihaqī, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Tabarāni, and Ibn Mardawiyah, have quoted several narrations from Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما' which affirm that the first descent was on the heaven of the earth and the second gradually on the Prophet ﷺ.[49]

## FIRST DESCENT

The narrations of Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما only indicate that first descent took place from the Guarded Tablet to a place on the heaven of this world and this place is called Bayt-ul-'Izzat also known as Baytul Ma'moor which is directly over the K'abah and is the place of worship of the Angels.[50]

How did this descent take place, what was the prudence behind it? Nothing can be said about it with certainty. However, some scholars, such *'Allāmah* Abu Shāmah رحمة الله عليه have stated that the intention was to emphasise on the splendour of the Qurān, and also to let the angels of that place know that it was the last Scripture meant to be sent down for the guidance of the people on this earth. Zarqāni رحمة الله عليه has made another point (Manāhil ul Irfān) that the purpose of these two descents was to affirm that this Book is free from any doubt about

49: See Al-Itqān v1, p41, chapter 16.
50: Tahir-ul-Kurdi. Tārikh-ul-Qurān -wa-Gharīb Ismihi wa Hikmihi. p.20. Jeddah 1365. AH.

its Divinity, and apart from the memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it is also preserved in two other places, *Luh 'Maḥfooz* (The Guarded Tablet) and Baytul 'Izzat. (Allah knows the best)

Anyway, who can encompass the expediencies of Allah? He alone knows the many reasons for that and it is fruitless for us to investigate these matters. However, we have been clearly told that this first descent took place on the *Night of power*.

## SECOND DESCENT

There is almost a consensus on that the second piecemeal descent of the Qurān started when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was forty years old, and according to the accepted view this descent commenced on the *Night of power*.[51] It was the same date on which the battle of Badr took place eleven years later. The Qurān says:

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ

> ...And in which We sent down upon Our servant (Muḥammad), on the day of Discrimination, the day on which the two hosts met (at Badr). (Al-Anfāl, 8:41)

In this way we find the following facts about the beginning of the descent of the Qurān are proved from the Qurān itself:

1: It started in the month of Ramadān.
2: It started on the Night of Power.
3: The battle of Badr took place on the same date.

However, it cannot be stated with certainty. According

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51: It is popularly known that he was commissioned to the office of Prophethood in the month of Rabi-'ul-Awwal through true dreams, and this continued for six months whereafter the Qurān began to be revealed in the month of Ramadan. Al-Itqān v1, p42.

to various narrations it could be 17th, 19th or 27th of the month of Ramadān.[52]

## THE VERSE THAT WAS THE FIRST TO BE REVEALED

The accepted view about it is that the first few verses of the Qurān that were revealed to the Holy Prophet were the initial verses of *Surah* al-'Alaq. According to Saḥiḥ Bukhari Sayyidah Aishah رضی الله تعالی عنها has stated that the *Waḥy* started as true dreams. Thereafter, he got an inner urge for Prayers and meditations, and for that he used to spend several days and nights in the Cave of Hira until one day Allah sent an angel to the Cave, and the first thing he said was اقرأ(Read!) The Prophet replied, "I do not know reading." Subsequent event has been described in the words of the Prophet ﷺ himself: "The angel then embraced me so hard that I was in much difficulty, then left me and said again 'Read'. I again replied 'I don't know reading'. The angel again embraced me still harder, and left me and said, 'Read', and I again replied, 'I do not know reading.' He embraced me a third time and left me again and said.

اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ ○ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ○ اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ○

Read in the Name of your Lord Who created man from a blood-clot. Read and your Lord is most Bountiful.

(Al-'Alaq, 96: 1-3)

When he was returning home after the revelation of these verses his heart was beating heavily. On reaching

52: See Tafseer Jam'-ul-bayān by Ibn Jarir, Al-Tabāri, v1, p7. published Egypt.

home addressing Sayyidah Khadijah رضی الله تعالی عنها he said,twice زَمِّلُوْنِیْ، زَمِّلُوْنِیْ (Wrap me up!)

A blanket was spread over him until his fear was gone.[53]

These were the first verses revealed to him. Therefore, a period of three years passed without any further revelation. This is known as the period of *Fatrat-e-Waḥy*'(period of *Waḥy*). Then again he saw the same angel sitting on a chair between the earth and sky, and he revealed to him the verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir.*

This incidence has been described in all the books of *Ḥadith* except Bukhari and Muslim with authentic proofs. The majority of scholars agree that the first revelation consisted of the first few verses of *Surah Al-'Alaq*, and then were the verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir*. In this context, however, there are three more opinions that deserve mention.

1: It appears from a narration of Ibn Jābir ﷺ carried by Bukhari in Kitabut-Tafseer that the verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir* were the first to be revealed to him, and on this basis some scholars have deduced that these verses have preceded those of *Surah Al-'Alaq*. But Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar رحمة الله عليه has explained that the narration of Ibn Jābir ﷺ as quoted in Kitabut Tafseer of Bukhari is abridged and two sentences are missing from it. The same has been quoted by Bukhari in chapter Bad'al-Waḥy on the authority of Imām Zuhri from Ibn Jābir ﷺ wherein the following words have been mentioned,

53: Saḥiḥ Bukhari, chapter ' what was the state of Prophet ﷺ when the *Waḥy* descended .

فَإِذَا الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي جَاءَنِي بِحِرَاءٍ جَالِسٌ عَلَى الْكُرْسِيِّ -

(So suddenly (I saw) the angel who had come to me in Hira was sitting on a chair.)

It is quite clear that the verses of *Surah Al-Alaq* had already been revealed when those of *Surah Muddaththir* were sent down.[54] However, it may be true to say that after the period of *'Fatrat-a-Waḥy'* the verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir* were the first to be revealed or it was the first *Surah* to be revealed as a whole, because *Surah Al-'Alaq* was not revealed in its entirety in the Cave of Ḥira.

Imām Baihaqi has quoted a narration from 'Amr bin Hubayl ﷺ that before the revelation of *Waḥy* the Prophet used to tell Khadijah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا that he heard some one calling 'O Muḥammad, O Muḥammad, whenever he was alone, until one day the voice said, "O' Muḥammad! In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds ...."to the end of the *Surah Al-Fatiḥah*."[55]

On the basis of this narration *'Allāmah* Zamakhshari has written that the first *Surah* to be revealed is *surah Al-Fatiḥah*. Rather he has considered it to be the verdict of most of the commentators.'[56] But Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar رحمة الله عليه has refuted him and stated that Zamakhshari is wrong in saying so and there are only few scholars who concur with him and most of the commentators have maintained that the first few verses of *Surah -al-'Alaq* were the first to be revealed.[57]

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54: Fatḥul Bāri, p23, v1 for further details see Faiḍ ul B-āri p25, v1. and Al-Itqān pp.24-25, v1.

55: Al-Itqān p25, v1.

56: Al-Zamakhshari: Al-Kishāf-An-Haqā-iq Ghawamed-ut-ta nzeel p775 v4 Al-Istiqāma Press Cairo 1365 AH.

57: Fath al Bāri p580,v8, Kitāb-ut-tafseer, Surah Iqra'.

As far as the foregoing narration of Bayhaqi is concerned, he has himself written that if this is correct then it is possible that this incident may have occurred after the revelations of *Surah al-'Alaq* and *Surah Muddaththir*.[58] *'Allāmah* Anwar Shah Kashmiri has stated that it is possible that *Surah Al-Fatihah* was revealed twice as was the case with some other verses once before *Surah Al-'Alaq* and a second time after that. In that case it will have to be admitted that the first revelation of *Surah Al-Fatiḥah* was not made as Qurānic revelation but the angel had simply recited it, and later on it was revealed as part of the Qurān at the time destined for it.[59] Anyway, except for these three narrations all other traditions are unanimous that the first few verses of *Surah al-'Alaq* were the first to be revealed. *'Allāmah* Suyūtī has quoted several narrations in support of this view.'[60]

## MAKKAN AND MADINAN VERSES

You must have observed that the titles of various Surahs of Holy Qurān denote a *Surah* to be "*Makkan*" or "*Madinan*". It is essential to know the exact interpretation of these words. Most of the commentators believe that a "Makkan" verse means a verse revealed before the Prophet's ﷺ arrival in Madinah on his migration from Makkah. Some people think that Makkan means a verse revealed in the city of Makkah, and Madinan means the one revealed in Madinah. But most of the commentators maintain that this view is incorrect because there are several verses which were not revealed in Makkah, but because they were revealed before Hijrah (Migration) they are classed as Makkan. Hence the verses revealed at Mina, 'Arafāt and during Mi'rāj and

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58: Al-Itqān p25, v1.
59: Fayḍul Bārī p25, v1.
60: Al-Itqān p24, v1.

even during the journey of migration to Madinah are classed as Makkan verses. Similarly, there are many verses which were not revealed in Madinah yet they are called Madinan. The Prophet ﷺ undertook several journeys after migration in which he even travelled hundreds of miles away from Madinah yet all those verses that were revealed in those places have been classed as Madinan, so much so that even the verses that were revealed in the very city of Makkah or its surrounding during the conquest of Makkah or treaty of Hudaibiyah[61] are classed as Madinan. Hence the verse...

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

Surely Allah commands you (O Believers) that you restore the trusts to their owners.... (An-Nisa, 4:58)

as Madinan although it was revealed In Makkah.[62]

In short, although the classification of Makkan and Madinan gives the impression that it is based on the place of revelation, in fact it relates to the time of revelation. Verses revealed before the completion of Migration are called Makkan, and those after that are Madinan.

Although the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not known to have himself classified a verse or a *surah* as Makkan or Madinan. Yet his companions and their followers, who had devoted their lives to the safeguard the words and meanings of the Quran have pointed out as to which of them are Makkan and which Madinan. For example, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud ﷺ has said, "I swear by the Being besides Whom there is none worthy of worship that I know about every verse of the Quran about whom it was revealed and where was it revealed".[63] And Sayyidina Ali ﷺ said, "By Allah,

61: For details see Al-burh an-fi-'uloomil Quran p88, v1, 9th edition.
62: Mana hil-ul-'Irfan p188, v1.
63: Al-Itqan p9, Bukhari.

I know about every verse whether it was revealed at night or during daytime, in the plains or over the moutains."[64]

Mostly it had been these companions of the Prophet ﷺ who told about the *Surahs* and verses of the Qurān whether they were Makkan or Madinan. However, we get information from some other sources as well. For example, the verses describing the incidence of Badr could only be Madinan. Similarly, most of the verses wherein the Prophet ﷺ has been asked to address the idolaters of Makkah could only be classed as Makkan. Hence some of verses have been classified on the basis of such evidences and conjectures. But since conjecture might vary there have resulted some differences of opinion among the commentators about some of the verses in this respect some of them classify a verse or *surah* to be Makkan and some others as Madinan.

Then there are some *Surahs* which are wholly Makkan or wholly Madinan. For example, *Surah al-Muddaththir* is wholly a Makkan *Sūrah* and *Sūrah Āl-Imrān* is entirely Madinan. It has also occurred that a *Surah* as a whole is Makkan but contains one or more Madinan verses. For example, *Surah Al-A'raf* is a Makkan *Surah* but the verses from وَاسْأَلْهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ to وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ are Madinan; or it may be the other way round for example *Surah Al-Ḥajj* is Madinan but four of its verses from وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى to عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَقِيمٍ are Makkan.....

It also becomes clear that classification of a *Surah* as Makkan or Madinan is based on the majority of its verses but in some cases a *Surah* has been classed as Makkan because its initial verses were revealed before Migration although the subsequent verses were revealed after Migration.[65]

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64: Al-Itqān, p.187, v2 80th edition. Ref. Mu'ammar.
65: Manahil 'ul-Irfān v1, p192.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MAKKAN AND MADINAN VERSES

After a logical analysis the commentators of the Qurān have described certain attributes of the various *Surahs* through which one can find at a glance whether a particular Sruah is Makkan or Madinan. Some of these are rigid rules while others are valid most of the time. The rigid rules are:

1: Every such *Sūrah* which has the word كلّا (certainly not) in it is a Makkan *Sūrah*. This word has been used 33 times in 15 *Sūrahs* and all such occur in the second half of the Qurān.

*Allāma* Deereeni رحمة الله عليه composed this complet

وما نزلت كلاء يثرب فاعلمن

ولم تأت فى القرآن فى نصفه الاعلٰى

كلا was not revealed at Madinah and it does not occur in the first half of the Qurān.

2: Every *Sūrah* containing a verse about Sajdah is a Makkan *Sūrah*. This rule is based on Ḥanafi school of thought because according to them there is no verse of Sajdah in *Surah Ḥajj* but according to Imām Shafa'ī there is a verse of *Sajdah* in this *Surah* while it is Madinan *Surah*, hence this would be an exception to the rule.[66a]

3: Every *Surah*, with the exception of *Surah al-Baqarah*, which relates the story of Sayyidina Ādam ﷺ and Iblis is Makkan.

4: Every *Surah* in which a permission of Jihad or its in junctions are given is Madinan.

5: Every *Surah* is Madinan wherein there is a mention of hypocrites. Some scholars have exempted *Surah 'Ankabut* from this rule. But in fact this *Surah* on the whole is Makkan but the verses that mention hypocrites are Madinan.[66b]

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66a: This characteristic is derived from al-Itq ān and other sources. It conforms to the contention that surah al-Hajj is Makkan but if we go by certain Sah ābis and Tabi' īn that it is Madinan then surah Hajj is an exception to this ruling. (Maulana Taqi Usmani)

66b: Manāhil al 'Irfān, p191, v1.

The following characteristics are general and frequent, but sometimes it may happen the other way about.

1: In Makkan *Surahs* people have been generally addressed as يَايها الناس (O mankind) while in Madinan *Surahs* they have been addressed as يَايها الذين امنوا (O you who believe).

2: Makkan *Surahs* and verses are generally short and concise while Madinan verses and *Surahs* are long and detailed.

3: Makkan *Surahs* generally deal with affirmation of oneness of Allah, Prophethood, Hereafter, picturising the Resurrection, words of comfort for the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the events concerning the previous nations. And, there are very few injunctions and rules in these *Surahs*. Contrary to this Madinan *Surahs* deal with social and family laws, injunctions relating to *Jihad ḥudūd* (limits) and duties.

4: Makkan *Surahs* mostly speak of confrontation with idolaters, while Madinan *Surahs* with the people ,of the Book and hypocrites.

5: The style of the Makkan *Surahs* is more elegant. They contain more similies, metaphors, allegories and parables, and a large vocabulary is used. The Madinan *Surahs* have a comparatively simple style.

The difference in mode and style of the Makkan and Madinan *Surahs* result from a difference in environment and addressees. In the Makkan stage Muslims were confronted mostly with the idolaters af Arabia as no Islamic state existed then. Hence, great emphasis was laid on restoration of Faith and Belief, moral reforms, arguments for refuting idolatry and on the miraculous status of the Holy Qurān. Contrary to this, Islamic state had come into existence in Madinah. The people were coming into the fold of Islam in increasing numbers. Idolatry had been confuted on the literary level, and the entire

ideological confrontation was now against the people of Scriptures (Jews and Christians). For this reason greater emphasis was laid on laws and commandments, Rights and Duties and refuting the false innovation of the people of Scriptures. The mode and style was adopted accordingly.

Every upright person can easily understand this difference in the style and description of Qurānic injunctions in the light of the evolution in human environments. But certain Orientalists whose hearts are kindling with the fire of enmity with Islam have tried to deduce self-conceived conclusions from the difference in the style of Makkan and Madinan verses and *Surahs*. Hence, some of them conclude that the Qurān is the work of the Prophet ﷺ because its style varies according to changing environment. If it was the word of Allah its style and mode would not have varied with change in the surroundings.

Anyone having the slightest sense of justice and rationalism in his heart would realise the absurdity of this objection. The true spirit of eloquent and laconic discourse is that it should correspond to the needs of its environment and the person addressed. Sticking to one rigid mode and style in all kinds of enviroments and varying types of addressees would be distasteful in the extreme, betraying an ignorance even of the fundamental principles of a linguistic style. Only those who are given to raise objections for the sake of criticisug attribute such distaste to the words of Allah.[67]

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67: For details see Manahil-ul-Irf ān pp198 to 232 by Shaikh Zarq āni.

## CLASSIFICATION OF REVELATION ON THE BASIS OF TIME AND PLACE

Apart from the classification of Quranic verses into Makkan and Madinan the commentators have classified them also according to time and place of their revelation. For example, *Hadri* verses are the ones that were revealed when the Prophet ﷺ was staying at home and not travelling. Most Quranic verses fall in this category. *Safri* verses are those revealed during the travels, for example.[68]

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

was sent down during conquest of Makkah. 'Allama Suyuti has counted about forty such verses.[69] In addition, he has given the following classification too:

1: ***Nahari*** (Day-time) revelations: These are the verses that were revealed in day light. According to *Allama* Ibn Habib, most verses belong to this category.
2: ***Layla*** (Nightly) revelations: These are the verses that were revealed at night. For example, the last few verses of *Surah Aal Imran* (v.198 to 200) beginning with ان فی خلق السموات والارض واختلاف الليل والنهار لأيت لاولی الالباب - were revealed at night. Allama Suyuti has mentioned twelve more examples in this category in Al-Itqan.
3: ***Sayfi*** (Summer) revelations: These are the verses that were revealed during summer. For example, the last verse of Surah an-Nisa:

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ

According to a *Hadith* related by Sayyidina Umar ؓ and found in Sahih Muslim, the verse was revealed in Summer. According to another tradition these verses were revealed on

68: An-Nisa, 4:58.
69: Al-Itqan, pp 19 to 21, v1.

the occasion of the Farewell Ḥajj. Thus all other verses revealed at that occasion are summer verses, e.g.

اَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ (Al-Ma'idah)

4: ***Shitā'i*** (Winter) revelations: These are the verses that were revealed during winter for example, the verses of *Surah An-Nur*.....

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۚ لَا تَحْسَبُوْهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ ۖ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ ۚ وَالَّذِيْ تَوَلّٰى كِبْرَهٗ مِنْهُمْ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ○ (النور، ۱۱)

which condemn the slanderers of Sayyidah 'Aishah رضی الله تعالی عنها were revealed during winter as has been narrated by 'Sayyidah Aishah رضی الله تعالی عنها herself as stated in Saḥiḥ Bukhari. Similarly, the verses of *Surah Al-Aḥzāb* about the Battle of Trench are winter revelations because this battle was fought in winter.

5: ***Firāshī*** Revelations in bed. These are the verses that were revealed when the Prophet was lying on his bed, for example, of *Surah Al-Maaidah* والله يعصمك من الناس (verse 70). '*Allāmah* Suyūtī has mentioned two more examples of this type of verses.

6: ***Nawmi*** (Revelations during sleep): Some scholars have described certain verses as having been revealed during the Prophet's ﷺ sleep. In this connection they quote a narration from Saḥiḥ-Muslim wherein Sayyidina Anas ﷺ has stated "The Holy Prophet ﷺ was once sitting among us when he suddenly got a wink of sleep, and thereafter he raised his head, smiled and said that a *Surah* has just been revealed to him, and then he recited *Surah Al-Kauthar*."

But the truth is that no verse was revealed to the

Prophet ﷺ during his sleep. The state of sleep referred to in the foregoing incidence is called اغفاءة in Arabic. Imām Rafa'ī رحمة الله عليه and others suggest that it was not sleep but a particular condition peculiar to the Prophet ﷺ generally experienced whenever *Waḥy* was sent to him. Therefore it is wrong to presume that *Wahy* descended while he was asleep *Allāma* Suyūṭī رحمة الله عليه concurs with Imām Rafa'ī رحمة الله عليه [70]

7: ***Samāvi*** (Revelations on the Heavens): These are verses that were revealed during the Holy Prophet's Ascention (*Mi'raj*). In this connection we find only one narration in Sahih Muslim according to which the last few verses of *Surah al Baqarah* were revealed during this journey near *Sidrat-ul-Muntahā*.[71]

8: ***Fidā ī*** (Revelations on the air); *'Allāmah* Ibn 'Arabi has described another type of revelation that was sent down neither on earth nor on the sky (but somewhere in the atmosphere). According to him, three verses of *Sūrah as-Ṣaffāt*, وما منا الا and one verse of *Sūrah az-Zukhruf*, وَاسْأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا belong to this category. But 'Allāmah Suyūtī رحمة الله عليه has stated that he could not find any authentic proof for this kind of revelation.

70: Al-Itqān v1, p23.
71: Al-Itqān v11, p24.

# GRADUAL DESCENT OF THE HOLY QURĀN

It has been mentioned earlier that the Qurān was not revealed on the Holy Prophet ﷺ instantly or all at a time, but it was sent down bit by bit over a period of twenty-three years. Some times Jibril عليه السلام came with a single verse or even a small portion of a verse, and sometimes several verses were revealed at one time. The smallest portion of the Qurān to be revealed was غير اولي الضرر (An-Nisa 4:94) which is a piece of a large verse, while, on the other hand the entire *Surah Al-Anām* was revealed all at one time.[72]

Due to a quotation of Ibn-Asākir some scholars have got an impression that Jibril عليه السلام did not bring more than five verses at a time. But 'Allāma Suyūtī رحمة الله عليه has refuted this view and stated that more than five verses have been revealed on occasions. For example, it is known from authentic *Aḥādith* that ten verses were revealed together at the time of case of *Ifk* (Slander). What actually happened was that Jibril عليه السلام used to make the Prophet ﷺ memorise five verses at time. When he memorised five verses, he would recite him more verses. Hence Imām Baihaqi has quoted Abul 'Āliyah رحمة الله عليه as saying 'Learn five verses of the Qurān at a time because the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to memorize five verses at a time from Jibril عليه السلام.'[73]

Why was the Qurān revealed in piecemeal rather than all at a time? The question was asked by the polytheists of Arab themselves from the Prophet ﷺ because they were

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72: Tafseer Ibn Kathīr v2. p122.

73: For a complete discussion refer to Al-Itq ān v1, p44.

used to hearing long eulogies in one sitting, and piecemeal revelations were rather astonishing for them. Apart from this, even before Qurān, other divine Scriptures namely Torah, Zaboor and Injeel were revealed each as a complete Book all at a time, the piecemeal method was not adopted in their case. Allah has Himself provided the answer to this question in the following words:

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً كَذٰلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنٰهُ تَرْتِيْلًا ○ وَلَا يَأْتُوْنَكَ بِمَثَلٍ اِلَّا جِئْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيْرًا ○

> And those who disbelieve say, "Why has not the Qurān been sent down on him all at once?" Thus, (We send down) that We may strengthen your heart (O Prophet) thereby; and We have rehearsed it to you in a well arranged gradual rehearsal. And they come not to you (O Prophet) with a similitude but that We bring to you the Truth (against it), and the best explanation.
>
> (Al-Furqān, 25:32-33)

Imām Rāzi has presented several reasons for the gradual revelation of the Qurān in his exegesis of the above verse. Let us go through a summary of his presentation:

1: The Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was unlettered. He could not read or write, hence if the entire Qurān was revealed all at a time it would have been difficult to memorize it. Contrary to this Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام knew reading and writing Torah hence was given to him as a complete Scripture in one go.

2: If the entire Qurān was revealed all at a time, it would have become obligatory to obey all Commandments at once and this would have been against the wisdom that has been one of the objectives of *Shari'ah*.

3: The Prophet ﷺ was being subjected to fresh torture every day. Frequent revelations of the Qurān through Jibril ﷺ made it easy for him to face these tortures and became a source of sustaining his spirit.

4: A great part of the Qurān deals with answers to questions of the people and various events at different times. Hence, revelation of those verses in their relevant backgrounds were more expedient and enhanced the insight of the believers. When the Qurān exposed that which was unseen, its truth became more manifest.[74]

## SEQUENCE OF REVELATION AND THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT

It has been stated earlier that the Qurān was not revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the order as it exists today. The order of its revelation was different and in accordance with the needs and cirumstances of particular times. As soon as a verse was revealed the Prophet ﷺ used to dictate it to the scribes and instruct where exactly to place it and the *Surah* wherein to write it. They would write it at the place shown by the Prophet ﷺ. No attempt was made either by the Prophet ﷺ or by his companions ؓ to preserve the chronological order of the revelations Hence nobody remembered the order of revelations when it was completed. Hence we may have a partial knowledge of the order of revelation of certain *Surahs* or verses, but the chronological order of the entire Qurān cannot be ascertained with authenticity. In his book Al-Itqān,[75] *Allāma* Suyūtī has attempted to fix a chronological order

74: At-tafseer-ul-Kabīr Imām Ar-Rāzi v6, p336 Al-Matba al 'Āmira 1324 AH.

75: Al-Itqān v1, p1-12 A book by an unknown scholar of Andulus has been referred to by Arthur Mubider as giving true chronological order but that is not reliable.

of revelation of the *Surahs* with reference to certain traditions or narrations, but in fact they only affirm which *Surah* is Makkan and which is Madinani the chronological order cannot be established. Recently some orientalists have also tried to establish the order of revelations. First of all the well known German Orientalist Noldeke[76] started working on it. Thereafter it became a subject of great interest with other orientalist. William Muir[77] has also made an individual attempt in this regard. In fact J.M. Rodwell in his English translation of the Qurān has arranged the *Surahs* in the hypothetical chronological order of Noldeke rather than their popular order.[78] In early twentieth century, Hartwig Hirschfeld tried to establish a chronological order of not only the *Surahs* but also the verses of the Qurān.[79] In addition to this, Regis Blachere[80] also understook this task on his French translation. Richard Bell[81] has also gained popularity for this in the west. Orientalists are still at work in this direction. And perhaps being influenced by them, Muslims also have undertaken research on the chronological order of revelation.[82]

But in our view all these attempts are akin to spending time on a problem that can never be successfully resolved. All the work done by the orientalists is mostly based on their personal conjecture about the text. Since the

76: Noldeke, Theodore, Geschichte des Qur`āns, Gottingen 1860.
77: Muir, William, The Life of Muhammad.
78: Rodwell, J.M. The Koran (translated) London 1953.
79: Hirschfold, Hartwig, New Researches into the composition and exegesis of the Qurān (1902).
80: Blachere, Regis Coran traduction selom unessai de reclassement des sourates, Paris 1947-51.
81: Bell, Richard, Translation of the Qurān (1937-39)
82: Yāqūb Hasan, Kashāf-ul-Huda. p175 to 182, Daftar Ishāat, Madras 1343 A.H.

conjectures differ one from the other the orders described by each of them are also different. Hence, no useful inferences can be derived from these conjectures despite all possible efforts.

In fact all these efforts of the orientalists are motivated by a particular bias in their minds. They think that the Qurān is still disarranged, and its true arrangement is the order in which it was revealed, but instead of writing it in the form of a book it was written on different materials and hence the original order could not be retained. Rodwell has written in the Preface of his translation of the Qurān that the present order of verses and *Surahs* of the Qurān is due to the fact that Zayd bin Thābit ؓ arranged them in the order in which he received them from various sources, and hence chronological order could not be retained.[83]

In his opinion; therefore, the present arrangement is defective which he wants to correct through his "Research". The picture thus drawn is not only imaginary but totally against undeniable facts because the order of arrangement of the Qurānic verses is proved by *Wahy* without any difference of opinion. Sayyidina Uthman ؓ has stated that the Prophet ﷺ used to give clear instructions to his scribes to place a fresh revealed verse in a particular *Surah* next to such and such verse.[84] And the companions ؓ memorised them in that very order that was shown by the Prophet ﷺ. It is absolutely wrong to say that Zayd ؓ wrote them in the order in which he received them from the companions. If that were so, the last verse in the existing Qur'an would have been

من المؤمنين رجال صدقوا الخ

83: Rodwell , J.M., The Koran (Translated) London 1953, p2

84: Fathul Bāri, Ref Sunan Arb'a and Musnad Aḥmed, v9, pp18.

because this was the last verse received by Zayd ﷺ but it has been inscribed in *Surah Al-Aḥzāb*. This makes it clear that Zayd ﷺ and his colleagues used to put a verse in the place indicated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However among learned people there are two opinions about the arrangement of *Surahs*. Some say that this, too laid down by *Waḥy*, while others maintain that the *Surahs* were arranged by the companions according to their understanding. More appropriate seems to be the fact that a number of *Surahs* were arranged according to *Waḥy* but no clear cut instructions were available about some of them, such as *Surah Tawbah* which was placed after *Surah Anfāl*, according to the opinion of the companions.[85]

## CAUSES OF REVELATIONS

There are two kinds of verses of the Holy Qurān. The first kind of verses are those that Allah sent down on His own without reference to an incident or enquiry by anyone. The second kind comprised verses that were revealed in reference to an incident or an enquiry. This is termed as the background or cause of revelation of such verses. For example, the following verse of *Surah Baqarah*.

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَّ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَّلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ

Marry not the mushrikat,[86] until they believe; and surely a believing slave girl is better than a mushrikah even though she please you. (Al-Baqarah, 2:221)

This verse was revealed in reference to a particular incident. In the pre-Islamic days Marthid bin Abi Marthid Ghanavi ﷺ had relations with a woman named 'Anaq. After

85: For details see Fathul B āri pp 32 to35 chap. T ālīful Qurān.
86: Al-Wāhidi P.38. Mustafa Al-Babi Asb ābul-Nuzool. Egypt 1379.

embracing Islam he migrated to Madinah and the woman remained in Makkah. After some time Marthid ﷺ went to Makkah on some business and 'Anaq invited him to fornication but he refused on the ground, "Islam has come between me and you". However, he was willing to marry her if the Prophet, ﷺ allowed him. On return to Madinah he sought permission of the Prophet ﷺ for this. This verse was revealed on that occasion prohibiting marriage with a Mushrikah (Idolatress).[87] This incident, therefore, forms the cause or the background of revelation of this verse.

## IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES

Some people whose knowledge is not deep enough to get a true cognition of such matters deny the importance of background of revelations and argue that the Qurān itself is self-explanatory and one should not feel the need for the causes or backgrounds of various revelations for their explanations. But they are wrong in thinking in this manner. Knowledge of the causes of revelations is an essential condition for exegesis of the Qurān, and it has many advantages some of which are mentioned here.

1: '*Allāmah*' Zarkashi'رحمة الله عليه' states that the first advantage of the knowledge of causes of revelation of a verse is that through them we understand the prudence behind various Commandments, and we know why a particular injunction was promulgated?[88] For example, in *Surah* an-Nisa it is ordained,

يَاأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارٰى

O you who believe! Draw not near Salah while you are intoxicated. (An-Nisa, 4:43)

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87: Polytheists.

88: Az-Zarkashi: Al-Burhān fi 'uloomal Qurān, v1, p22. Esa Al-Babi 1376 AH.

If we do not keep in view background of revelation of this verse, the question would naturally arise in our minds that when intoxication is totally prohibited by the Qurān what does this verse mean by disallowing Salah in a state of intoxication. The answer to this question can only be found in the background of its revelation. It is stated by Sayyidina 'Ali ﷺ that 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'Auf ﷺ once invited some companions to dinner. Drinking had not been prohibited until that time, and hence wine was served after dinner. Meanwhile the time for *Salah* came and one of the companions led the *Salah* and because he was intoxicated, he made a mistake in the recitation of the Qurān. The above verses were revealed after this incident.[89]

2: Often it is not possible to understand the true meaning of a verse without knowing the background of its revelation. If the background is unknown, a totally wrong meaning may be deduced. A few examples shall make it clear.

In *Surah Al-Baqarah*, Allah says:

وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّٰهِ

And to Allah belong the East and the west, so withersoever you turn, there is Allah's countenance.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:115)

If the background of this verse is not kept in view one may deduce that in *Salah* there is no obligation to face towards a particular direction but this inference is wrong because at another place the Qurān itself has enjoined that Muslims must face towards K'abah during *Salah*.

This problem can only be solved through the background of revelation of this verse. 'Abdullah bin

89: Tafseer Ibn Kathīr, v1, p500, Matba'tul Mustafa Muḥammad 1356 AH.

'Abbās رضی اللہ تعالی عنهما states that on the occasion of change of direction of Qiblah of Muslims from Bayt-ul-Maqdis to K'abah the Jews objected to the change in Qiblah. This verse was revealed in the context of this objection[90],stating that all dicrections belong to Allah and He is Omnipresent hence it becomes obligatory to face in the particular direction commanded by Him.There is no room for conjectures in this matter.

Similarly in the following verse, it.is stated:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيْمَا طَعِمُوْٓا اِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَّاٰمَنُوْا

On those who believe and do righteous deeds there is no blame for what they may have eaten (in the past) provided they abstain (from the forbidden things), and believe (firmly). (Al-Mā'dah, 5:93)

If we study this verse only in its apparent meanings, it may be inferred that there is no food which is prohibited for Muslims if they are believers and fear Allah and do good deeds. In that case, they are free to eat and drink all that they desire. And since these verses were revealed in association with the verses that prohibited intoxication it can be said that it allows alcoholic drinks and other intoxicants to virtuous believers. Even some companions have misunderstood this verse and they had argued with Sayyidina Umar ﷺ that a person charged with drinking cannot be subjected to *Ḥadd*[91] if his life in general had been a pious life. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ removed their misunderstanding by referring to the context in which the verse was revealed.[92]

90: Al-Itqān, v11, pp 19 to 21.

91: Hadd: specific Qur'ānic punishment.

92: Al-Qurtabi: Al-Jami ' l-Ahkam-al-Qur'ān v6, p297, Cairo 1387 AH.

Actually, some companions had wished to know the fate of the departed Companions who had indulged in gambling and drinking before they were forbidden.

This verse was revealed in reply to this question and is specific to this incident.

It clarifies that those who had indulged in drinking and gambling before the ban would not be punished for that if they were believers and had obeyed other commands.[93]

Here is another example. In *Surah Baqarah* it is stated:

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا

> Surely Safa and Marwah are among the emblems of Allah: So whosoever performs the Ḥajj to the House (of Allah) or performs Umrah, there is no blame on him if he goes around them. (Al-Baqarah, 2:158)

In this verse the words "there is no blame on him" apparently signify that the "Run" between Safa and Marwah as a rite of Ḥajj or 'Umrah is only permissible but not obligatory.' 'Urwah bin Zubair ﵁ had the same misunderstanding. Sayyidah 'Aishah رضی الله تعالی عنها told him that there used to be two idols kept on the top of these hills. One was called Asāf and the other's name was Nā'ilah and due to this the companions fell into doubt lest the "Run" (Sa'ee) may have been forbidden. This verse was revealed to remove their doubt.[94]

These are a few examples but many more can be cited to indicate that there is a good number of verses which cannot be properly understood without the knowledge of their background.

93: Ibid, v2, 294

94: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān v1, p104 (Ref, Bukhāri).

3: At times Qurān uses words which have a close relation to the context in which they were revealed, and if their exact background is not known these words would appear irrelevant, and that would spoil the eloquence and laconic beauty of the Qurān, for example, the following verses:

وَاللَّائِي يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِن نِّسَائِكُمْ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ

And as for your women who have despaired of menstruation if you are in doubt, their waiting period is three months, and of those too who have not yet menstruated... (At-Talāq, 65:4)

In this verse the words "if you are in doubt" appear to be irrelevant and hence some people deduced from these words that an old woman who has stopped menstruating and it is certain that she is not pregnant, for her there is no period (of waiting).[95]

But the cause of its revelation clarifies the reason for these words. Ubayy bin Ka'ab ؓ has stated that at the time the period of waiting was prescribed in *Surah An-Nisa*, he asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, "There are some women for whom this period has not been defined in the Qurān, such as small girls who have not yet started menstruating, and old women who have stopped menstruating and pregnant women. This verse was revealed in this context, and it has covered all three kinds.[96]

Further, in *Surah al-Baqrah* it has been stated:

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ

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95: Al-Itqān, v1, p30.
96: Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr v14, p381.

> And when you have performed your devotional rites, remember Allah, like your remembrance of your forefathers... (Al-Baqarah, 2:200)

If we do not keep in view the background of revelation of this verse the pharse "like your remembrance of your forefathers" would appear irrelevant, because it is difficult to understand why on this particular occasion Allah's remembrance should be compared to that of the forefathers. But the background of its revelation makes it clear. This verse has been revealed in connection with the rites of stay of pilgrims in Muzdalifah. It was customary with the pagan Arabs that after fulfilling the devotional rites of Hajj they used to boast about the virtues and achievements of their forefathers. Allah ordained that instead of boasting about forefathers they should remember and glorify Allah.[97]

4: There are many places in the Qurān where a passing reference is made to a particular incident, and such verses cannot be understood unless that incidence is known, for example:

وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

> And you (O Prophet) threw not when you did throw (a handful of dust), but Allah threw, it .... (Al-Anfāl, 8:17)

Here, there is a reference to the battle of Badr when the Prophet ﷺ had thrown a handful of dust towards the enemy who had besieged the Muslims, and the dust grains went into their eyes and the siege was lifted.[98]

It is quite obvious that one will not understand the true meaning of this verse without knowing this background.

It is not intended here to describe all the benefits of studying the causes or backgrounds of particular verses but

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97: See Asbābun-Nuzūl lil-Waḥidi p34.
98: Asbāb-un-nuzūl-lil-Waḥidi p133.

the foregoing examples must have highlighted their importance to an exegetist of the Qurān. For the same reason Imām Mahdi رحمة الله عليه has stated:

> As long as the background of a verse and circumstances are unknown, it is not possible to define the meaning of the verse.[99]

Hence those people who reject the importance of causes or backgrounds of revelations are either ignorant or they do it in order to give their own interpretation to the subjects of the Qurān.

## CAUSES OF REVELATIONS AND SHAH WALI-ULLAH

The renowned scholar of *Ḥadith* Shāh Wali-ullāh Dehlavi رحمة الله عليه has presented a thoughtful discussion on the causes of Revelations in his book "Al-Fawzul Kabīr. Some people who have not been able to understand it properly say that he has not given any importance to the causes of Revelations in exegesis or has at least minimised their importance. But this is due to lack of understanding of the meaning of Shāh Waliullāh's discussion. In fact, he considers the knowledge of the causes of Revelations as a prime condition for exegesis, just like the majority of Muslims. But what he has written is this:

"ويذكرون المحدثون فى ذيل ايات القرآن كثيرا من الاشياء
ليست من قسم سبب النزول فى الحقيقة مثل استشهاد الصحابة
فى مناظراتهم بآية وتلاوته صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم اية للاستشهاد
فى كلامه الشريف او رواية حديث وافق الاية فى اصل الغرض او
تعيين موضع النزول او تعيين اسماء المذكورين بطريق الابهام او

99: Asbab-un-Nuzūl-lil-Waḥidi p4.

بطريق التلفظ بكلمة قرآنية او فضل سور و ايات من القران اوصوورة امتثاله صلى الله عليه وسلم بامرمن اوامر القران و نحو ذٰلك، وليس شيء من هٰذا فى الحقيقة من اسباب النزول۔ "[100]

The gist of this discussion is that in the books of exegesis sometimes we find several narrations in connection with a single verse. All these narrations are not related to the causes of Revelation of that verse but may contain the following:

1: At times a Companion may have quoted a verse as an argument at a scholarly discussion, and the commentators cite his argument as a minor relation to that verse.

2: Sometimes the Prophet ﷺ cited a verse as a testimony on a particular occasion. The commentators reproduce that when explaining the meaning of that verse.

3: Sometimes the Prophet ﷺ stated the same subject as has been revealed in a Qurānic verse. In the books of exegesis that *Ḥadith* is also quoted under that verse.

4: Sometimes the exegetists quote a narration simply to tell the place where the verse was revealed, and this is also made a part of exegesis.

5: Sometiems the Qurān mentions certain people without giving their names. The commentators specify their names through various narrations.

6: Sometimes the correct pronunciation of a particular word of the Qurān is known through a *Ḥadith*. The books of exegesis reproduce that *Ḥadith*.

7: Some traditions and verses define the excellence of certain *Surāhs* or verses of the Qurān. The

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100: Al-Fawzul-Kabīr pp22,23 Maktaba Fakhriya, Muradabad 1358 AH.

commentators quote them at the relevant place in their exegesis.

8: Sometimes those *Aḥādīth* are included in the exegesis which tell us how the Holy Prophet ﷺ conduced himself in relation to the injunction contained in the verse.

Shāh Wali-ullāh has stated that all such narrations come neither under the definition of causes of Revelation nor is it necessary for the commentators to be fully conversant with them. However, all those traditions which are factually the causes of revelation must be known to any commentator, and it is not proper for anyone to explain the Qurān without this knowledge. Shāh Wali-Ullah has elaborated this in the following words:

و انما شرط المفسر امران، الاول ما تعرض به الأيات من القصص فلا يتيسر فهم الايماء بتلك الأيات الا بمعرفة تلك القصص، والثانى ما يخصص العام من القصة او مثل ذلك من وجوه صرف الكلام عن الظاهر فلا يتيسّر فهم المقصود من الأيات بدونها۔ [101]

"However, a commentator must have knowledge of two things. First, the incidents and happenings in the verses, because it is not easy to understand the hints unless the incidents are known. Secondly, sometimes an incident is described in common words but the background of its revelation makes it specific, or the apparent meaning is different from the one determined in the light of the background of its revelation. It is difficult to understand the true meanings of Qurānic verses without having knowledge of such traditions.

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101: Al-Fawzul Kabīr fi Usūl tafsīr p.23.

## CAUSES OF REVELATIONS AND GENERALISATION AND SPECIFICATION OF COMMANDS

The verses of the Qurān revealed against a particular background are of four kinds in relation to their general or specific applicatioin.

1: Verses where a particular person has been named and thus it is specified that the subject matter refers exclusively to him. There is a consensus of opinion among the scholars that the subject matter of these verses would relate specifically to the person named and shall not apply to others, for example.

تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ○

Perished are the hands of Abu Lahab. (Al-Lahab,111:1)

The background of revelation of this verse is well known, that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ stood atop the mount Safā and preached Islam to the Quraysh, Abu Lahab had said:

تَبًّا لَكَ أَلِهٰذَا دَعَوْتَنَا ؟

Perish be you, did you invite us for this?

This was the cause of revelation of the above verse and the name of Abu Lahab has been specifically mentioned. Therefore, the warning refers to him alone.[102]

2. In the other kind of verses attributes of a particular person or a group or a thing are described without naming anyone and some injunctions are laid down on the basis of these attributes. However, other evidences reveal the person or group or things meant. In this situation also there is a consensus among the scholars that the commandment thus pronounced shall be

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102: Asbāb un Nuzūl lil Wahidi, p261.

exclusive-ly applicable to that person, or group or thing alluded to in the Qurān and it shall not apply to others even though the same attributes may be found in them, for example the verse of *Surah Al-Layl*:

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى ○ الَّذِيْ يُؤْتِيْ مَالَهُ يَتَزَكّٰى ○

Far removed from it will be the most God-fearing who gives his wealth to purify himself. (Al-Layl, 92:17-18)

This verse was revealed about Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq ﷺ whose practice was to purchase poor slaves and then free them.[103] Here, the name of Abu Bakr has not been mentioned but the attributes pertain to him and narrations of the Prophet ﷺ tell us that it refers to Abu Bakr ﷺ alone and, therefore the grace of this verse is reserved for him. For this reason, Imām Rāzi has inferred from this verse that Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq ﷺ is the most exalted among all mankind after the Prophets عليهم السلام because in this verse he has been described as "the most devoted."

And another verse says..

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. (Al-Ḥujurāt, 49:13)

There is consensus among the commentators that the verse specifically refers to Abu Bakr ﷺ even though he has not been named, because of two reasons. First, the word الاتقى (Al-Atqā) can be used for a specific person only due to the prefix ال (Al) according to Arabic grammar. Secondly, the *Ḥadith* of the Prophet ﷺ confirms this assertion.[104]

Hence the verses would not be applicable to anyone else

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103: Asbāb-un-Nuzūl lil Waḥidi p255.
104. Al-Itqān, v1, p31.

even if he were to spend in the way of Allạh.[105]

Verses in the third category are those that were revealed against a particular background. However, its words carry a universal application and some other extraneous argument also signifies that the commandment in that verse is not exclusive to that background alone but in fact would apply to all incidents of a similar nature. The consensus about this type of verses is that its application will be universal as governed by its words and shall not be specific to the incident in the background of its revelation. For example, it is authentically established that the introductory verses of *Surah Al-Mujādilah* were revealed about Sayyidah Khawlah رضی اللہ عنہا [106] whose husband had said to her:

اَنْتِ عَلَیَّ کَظَهْرِ اُمِّیْ

You are to me like the back of my mother.

But the words of the verses denote that the commandment given thereby is not exclusive for the husband of Sayyidah Khawlah رضی اللہ عنہا but is applicable to all such people who use these words for their wives.

It is obligatory for these men that before they have sexual relation with their wives they should free a slave, or keep sixty fasts or feed sixty poor people.

4: The fourth kind of verses were revealed in the background of a particular incident but the words carry a general sense and there is no extraneous argument to suggest that the verse or verses are exclusive to that incident in application or have a general application for all similar situations. There is a slight difference of opinion about it among the various commentators. Some say that the verse should be related strictly to the

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105. For further details see Al-Itq ān v 1, p30.
106. Asbāb-un-Nuz ūl-lil-Wāḥidi p231.

cause of its revelation but, contrary to this, majority of scholars hold the view that in this situation it would be more reliable to interpret the words in their genéral meaning rather than in the specific context of the cause of revelation. Hence, the tenets derived out of the verse should apply to all such situations as the words suggest. The rule framed by the authors of principles in Jurisprudence and Exegesis is described by the popular sentence :

اَلْعِبْرَةُ لِعُمُوْمِ اللَّفْظِ لَا لِخُصُوْصِ السَّبَبِ

Reliance will be placed on the generalisation of words and not on the specific cause of revelation.

But in fact this difference is only hypothetical. In practice there is no difference, because even those scholars who firmly bind the verses of Qurān with the cause of their revelation apply them in other similar situations.

The only difference is that the majority of scholars deduce their laws with the verse as their source while others do so on the authority of Ḥadith, consensus etc. This is easily understood with the following example. In *surah al-Baqarah* it has been stated:

وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُوْ عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مَيْسَرَةٍ

But if the debtor is in difficulty let there be respite till it is easy (for him). (Al-Baqarah, 2:280)

The background of revelation of this verse is that Banu Mughirah owed some money to Banu 'Amr bin 'Umayr. Meawhile, the verses prohibiting interest were revealed. Banu 'Amr said to their debtors that they would write off the interest but asked for prompt repayment of the principal. Banu Mughirah made the plea that they were facing difficulty and requested some respite. Banu 'Amr

refused to give them any respite. The said verse was revealed concerning this incident.[107]

Now both groups of scholars agree that the commandment contained in the verse has a general application. It is better for every lender to give respite to his debtor if he faces straitened circumstances. The difference in their views lies in that a majority of them take that very verse as the source of this particular commandment, but others argue that while the verse was meant exclusively for Banu 'Amr, they cite the *Aḥādith* and consensus as the source of general application. It thus proves that this difference in opinion does not have any effect on the practical application of the command.[108]

## DIFFERENT AHĀDITH AGAINST CAUSES OF REVELATIONS

In working on the exegesis of the Qurān a great difficulty is experienced in citing the causes of revelation when we come across different narrations for the same verse. Anyone not fully conversant with the principles of exegesis gets involved into various doubts and confusions. Hence, it is essential to understand the reality of these differences. To get over these difficulties, scholars have framed very useful rules, which are summarised below.

1: The Companions ﷺ and their followers were used to explain a verse saying, this verse was revealed about such and such tenet or matter. This creates the wrong impression that they may have defined the cause of its revelation, while in fact they meant to explain that such and such tenet is derived from this particular verse.[109]

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107:Asbābun-Nuzūl-lil-Waḥidi p51.

108:We have presented a brief account of this question. It is discussed in detail in Al-Burhān by Zarkashi v1, p24 Al-Itqān v1, p30, and Manāhil ul Irfān v1, pp118-127.

109:Ibn Taymiyah: Muqaddamah fi Usūl it Tafsīr p9. al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyah Lahore 1388 AH. and Al-Itqān.

For example, in *Surah an Nisa*, Iblis has been quoted to have said,

وَلَاٰمُرَنَّهُمْ فَلَيُغَيِّرُنَّ خَلْقَ اللّٰهِ

And I will command them so that they will alter Allah's creation. (An-Nisa, 4:119)

In explaining this, Anas bin Mālik ﷺ 'Ikr imah ﷺ and others have stated that this verse has been revealed about castration,[110] but this does not mean that some one got himself castrated at that time and thus became the cause of its revelation. In fact it means that castration is one of the devilish acts which Satan uses to alter Allah's creation. It does not mean that altering Allah's creation depends on castration but there may be several other ways to do that and these have been mentioned in the books of Exegesis.

On getting acquainted with the mode of description employed by the Companions and their followers we come to know of two rules in connection with the background of revelation.

a: * If two different narrations are quoted to explain a verse and the words. "This verse was revealed about such and such matter," have been used in both the narations, there is in fact no contradiction in both of them. Both are correct in their context because none of them mean that the incident was the cause of revelation of that verse. It only means that this matter is governed by the subject and injunctions of this verse. The following example shall make it more clear. Allah has said about pious persons

تَتَجَافٰى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ

Their sides forsake their beds. (As-Sajdah, 32:16)

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110:Durr Manthur, Suyūti, v2, p223.

About this verse Anas bin Mālik ﷺ states that this verse has been revealed about those Companions who kept themselves engaged in offering optional Ṣalah between the Maghrib and Isha obligatory prayrers. In another narration he has been quoted to have said that the verse has been revealed about those who kept themselves awake for the *'Isha Ṣalahs*. Some other Companions consider it to be attributed to those who used to wake for late night prayers (Tahajjud).[111]

On the face of it, the varying interpretations seem to be due to different causes of its revelation but in fact these are the various attributes of this verse and it includes virtuous deeds in its meaning.

b: If there are two narrations used in the exegesis of a verse, one using the words... نزلت الاية فى كذا (This verse has been revealed about such matter) and the other specifically mentioning an incident the cause of its revelation, Then in this case the latter narration will be relied upon. The former narration being non-specific in relation to the cause of revelation shall be taken as narrators own interpretation or opinion. For example, the Quran states...

نِسَآؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا۟ حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ

Your wives are a tillage for you so come to your tillage as you will. (Al-Baqarah, 2:223)

About this verse Bukhāri has quoted Ibn 'Umar ﷺ as saying that it has been revealed about *rectal coitus* with women.[112] But Jābir ﷺ and 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās رضى الله تعالى عنهما specify the cause of its revelaion to refute the prevalent Jewish conception that *vaginal coitus* with a woman in lateral or prostate position will result in squint-eyed offsprings. Thus, this verse has clarified that coitus should be exclusively vaginal but any posture may be adopted for it.[113]

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111:Tafsīr Jame-ul-bayan by Ibn Jarīr, pp 57-58, Maimniyah, Egypt.
112:Al-Itqān, v1, p32.
113:Asbābun Nuzūl lil-Waḥidi p41.

Of the two foregoing narrations, the version of Sayyidina Jābir ﷺ and Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ is preferred because it is specific and detailed while Ibn 'Umar's narration will be taken as his own interpretation.[114] In fact even he does not read in this verse permission for *rectal coitus*. Rather, he means that the verse prohibits this the unnatural act,[115] (because in it the woman has been called a tillage, that is, a means of production of human race which is not possible through *rectal coitus*.)

2: If one narration is supported by a sound transmission and the other has weak or inconsistent precedents the former will be adopted and the latter ignored. For example the initial verses of *Surah Ad-duha*

وَالضُّحَى ۝ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَى ۝ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى ۝

By the morning brightness, by the night when it is still, your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased.

(Ad-Duha 93:1-3)

Bukhāri and Muslim have narrated the version of Jundub ﷺ ascribing the background of these verses to an incident when due to some trouble the Holy Prophet ﷺ could not offer *Salat-ut-Tahajjud* (late night pryers) for one or two nights. On this an unbeliever woman taunted him: "It seems that your Satan (God for·bid), has deserted you."

On the other hand, Tabarāni and Ibn Abi Shaybah have quoted Khawlah, the grandmother of Ḥafs bin Maisarah رضی اللہ تعالی عنها that a puppy once sat down under a cot in the house of the Prophet ﷺ and died there. "For four days thereafter no *Waḥy* came to him and he asked me what has happened in the house that Archangel Jibrīl was not coming to me, I thought I must clean the house. When I swept

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114:Al-Itqān v1, p32.
115:Manāhil-ul-'Irfan v1, p108.

under the cot the dead puppy was discovered under it." These verses were revealed on this occasion. But this narration is not based on authentic precedents because, as Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar says some of its narrators are unreliable.

Hence, the narration carried by Bukhāri has the reliable background of revelation of these verses.[116]

3: Sometimes both the narrations are based on authentic precedents but there may exist a reason to prefer one of them. For example, the precedents of one of them may be more authentic than of the other, or the narrator of one was a witness of that incident while the other was not. In such a situation the narration having stronger reason for preference will be adopted. For example the verse of *Surah Al-Isrā*, says.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

and they ask you (O Prophet) concerning the Spirit, say, "The spirit is by the command of my Lord, and you have not been given of knowledge except a little."

(Al-Isrā, 17:85)

Imām Bukhāri carries a *Ḥadith* about the background of revelation of this verse from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. He said, "I was going with the Prophet in Madinah and he walked with the support of a date-stick, we passed by some Jews. They said to each other that they should ask him some questions. Accordingly, they asked him to tell them about the Spirit. On this he stopped and after some moments raised his head and I knew that he was receiving a *Waḥy*. Then he recited the verse قل الروح من امر ربی۔ الخ (say, the spirit...)"

The other version is quoted by Imām Tirmizi from Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ that the Quraysh of Makkah once asked the

116:Al-Itqān v.1 p.33 where more examples may be found.

Jews to advise them what they may ask the Prophet ﷺ. The Jews suggested that they ask him about the Spirit and then this verse was revealed.

The first version denotes that this verse was revealed in Madinah while the second one suggests that it was revealed in Makkah. The precedents of both are correct, but preference will be in favour of the first because its narrator 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ؓ was himself present when the incident occurred, but it is not clear from the second narration whether the narrator was himself present when the incident occurred.[117]

4: Sometimes there are more causes of revelation of a verse than one. Several identical incidents occur one after the other and the verse is revealed concerning them. Now, one narrator cites one incident while another other incident as its background. Apparently, they seem to be contradictory but in fact there is no contradiction because both of them are causes of revelation. For example, regarding the verses of *Suarah An-Nūr* about Li'ān (oath of condemnation) Imām Bukhāri has quoted 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās رضی اللہ تعالٰی عنھما as saying that Hilāl bin Umaiyyah ؓ in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ accused his wife of committing adultery. On that, these verses were revealed... والذین یرمون ازواجھم - الخ، {And those who accuse their wives...*an-Nūr*, 24:6} Again, Bukhāri has quoted another narration by Sahl bin Sa'ad ؓ that 'Uwaimir ؓ had asked the Prophet ﷺ whether a man will be liable for indemnity of blood if he kills the man whom he finds having sex with his wife.

What should he do in such a situation. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Qurānic verses have been revealed about you," and then he recited these very verses. There is yet another narration in Musnad Bazzāz citing Ḥuzayfah ؓ that the

117:Al-Itqān v1, p34.

verses were revealed after Abu Bakr ﷺ and 'Umar ﷺ had been discussing the subject.'

The fact is that all these three incidents had already occurred before the verses were revealed and each of them can be said to be the cause or background of their revelation.

5: Sometimes it happens the other way round. Several verses are revealed in the background of a single incident. Now, one narrator cites the incident relating to one of those verses, while another cites the same incident in relation to another verse. This gives an impression of an apparent contradiction but in fact no contradiction exists.

For example, Imām Tirmizi and Ḥākim have quoted Umm Salamah رضی اللہ تعالٰی عنہا that she once said to the Prophet that she did not find any mention of women in the Qurān in relation to migration etc, and the following verse was revealed after that;

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّيْ لَا أُضِيْعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى

So their Lord accepted their prayer, (saying), "Never will I waste the work of any worker among you, be he male or female." (Al-'Imrān, 3:195)

Imām Ḥākim has also quoted Umm Salamah رضی اللہ عنہا that she once said to the Prophet that Qurān mentions only males while there is no mention of women anywhere. On this, the following verses were revealed ان المسلمین والمسلمٰت {Surely, the Muslim men and the Muslim women...}[118] and انی لا اضیع عمل عامل منکم من ذکر او انثی {Never will I waste}[119]

118:This is a verse from surah Al-Ahzāb (33:35) in which men and women are named against several righteous deeds.

119:Al-Itqān v.1 p 35.

## REPETITION OF REVELATIONS AND ITS REALITY

The sixth form is repetition of a verse.

6: Sometimes the same verse has been revealed more than once and every time its revelation had a different background. As a result, some narrators described the other background. Here also there is no contradiction because the verse has been revealed separately on both the occasions.

For example, Imām Bukhāri and Imām Muslim have quoted that at the time of Abu Ṭālib's death the Prophet ﷺ said to him, "O my uncle, just say 'There is no God but Allah' then I shall intercede for you."

Abu Jahl and 'Abdullah bin Umaiyyah were also present there and, when they found him inclined to believe, they at once said to Abu Ṭālib, "Do you want to give up the religion of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib?" And they kept on speaking until Abu Ṭālib came out with the words, "I persist on the religion of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib." The Prophet ﷺ then siad, "I will keep on begging forgiveness for you until I am stopped from doing so." The following verse was then revealed,

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَنْ يَّسْتَغْفِرُوْا لِلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ

It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe to ask forgiveness for the associators... (*Al-Tawbah*, 9:113)

On the other hand, Imām Tirmizi has quoted Sayyidina 'Ali ؓ with a sound line of transmission as saying, "I heard a man begging forgiveness for his polytheist parents. I asked him why he did that for his polytheist parents. He told me that Prophet Ibrahim ؑ had also begged forgiveness for his father who was an idolater. When I told this to our Prophet ﷺ this verse was

revealed to him."

Yet another incident has been cited by Hākim from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ went to the graveyard and kept on praying and weeping by the side of a grave. Then he said that that was his mother's grave, and he begged permission from Allah to pray for her forgiveness but he was not given the permission, and this verse was revealed to him. ما كان للنبي والذين امنوا، الخ .

This very verse has been mentioned in the background of all the three incidents. Hence the commentators have deduced that this verse was revealed separately on all the three occasions.[120]

Here the question may arise when a verse was already written down and memorized by the Prophet ﷺ and a number of his companions why was it revealed repeatedly?

The question has been answered very well by Shāh Wali Ullāh Muhaddith Dehlavi that in such cases the actual revelation of the verse is made just once. However, when an incident, similar to the one that was the cause of its first revelation, occurs again the same verse is recalled as a reminder in the heart of the Prophet ﷺ. It then serves as a guidance in that situation too. This reminder from Allah is infused in the heart of the Prophet ﷺ and is, therefore, the same as 'Ispiration in the Heart' which is one of the kinds

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120: This example has been taken from Al-Itqān v1. p34 but it is subject to assumption that all the three narrations are authentic while in fact the authenticity of the third narration is doubtful. Ḥāfiẓ Zahabi censors it (Mustadrak vl.2. p.336) and Ibn Hajar has cited different views of the 'Ulamā on Ayyub bin Hānī (Tahzib at Tahzīb vl.1. p.414) It can neither be considered as forged not can it form the basis for a delicate maxim concerning belief. Thus a large group of the 'Ulamā of Ahl-us Sunnah believe, on the basis of several arguments, that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ were believers by virtue of their Faith on the religion of Ibrahim. 'Allāma Suyuṭī himself has written a resolute treatise on this subject.

of *Wahy* described in detail earlier. The exegetists liken it to 'Repeated Revelation.' Everytime it was inspired in the heart of the Prophet ﷺ it was like a fresh revelation.[121]

The doubts or differences that are created in connection with the causes of revelation through *Aḥādith* can be removed if the above six principles are kept in view.



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121:Al-Fawzul Kabīr p22, (Ma'rifah Asbāb-un-Nuzūl).

**CHAPTER 3**

# THE SEVEN READINGS OF THE QURĀN

According to an authentic *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

ان هذا القرآن أنزل علىٰ سبعة احرف فاقرءوا ما تيسر منه ـ

> Qurān has been revealed covering seven versions. So recite it in a way that is easy for you from out of these.[122]

What is meant by revelation of the Qurān on seven letters? This is a very momentous and lengthy subject and, indeed, one of the most complicated discussions on the sciences of the Qurān. It is very difficult to discuss it in full details in this work but the important things about it are being presented below.

The *Ḥadith* quoted above is uninterrupted as far as its meanings are concerned, so that the renowned Muhaddith Imām Abu 'Ubayd Qāsim bin Salām رحمة الله عليه has affirmed its continuity. The well-known Imām of Ḥadith and Qir'at 'Allāmah Ibnul-Jazari has stated that he has put together all the variations of this Tradition in a separate chapter. According to him, this *Hadith* has been narrated by 'Umar bin Khattāb, Hishām bin Ḥākim bin Hizam, 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'Auf, Ubayy bin Ka'b, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Mu'āz ibn Jabal, Abu Hurayrah, 'Abdullah bin

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122:Sahih Bukhāri, Kitāb Fadail ul Qurān.

'Abbās, Abu Sa'īd Khudri, Ḥuzaifah bin Yamān, Abu Bakr, 'Amr bin 'Āas, Zayd bin Arqam, Anas bin Mālik, Samurah bin Jundub, 'Umar bin Abi Salmah, Abu Jaham, Abu Ṭalhā and Umm Ayyub Ansariyah رضی الله تعالی عنهم اجمعین.[123]

In addition, several others have referred to the incident that while addressing a congregation, Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ the third Caliph, proclaimed that all those who had heard the tradition that the Qurān was revealed on seven letters each of which was effectual, should stand up. In response to this the number of companions who stood up was so large that they could not be counted.[124]

## MEANING OF SEVEN LETTERS

The first problem we face with this *Hadith* is what is meant by the revelation of Qurān on "Seven Readings?" We find a great deal of difference of opinion on this subject. Upto 35 different views have been quoted by 'Allāma Ibn-ul-'Arabi and others. Some of the popular views are quoted below.

1: Some people think that "Seven Readings" refers to the recitals of the seven well-known Qāris (Recitors of Qurān). But this view is unfounded and wrong, because the recitals *mutawātir*[125] of the Qurān are not limited to seven. Rather, many other recitals are confirmed through *Tawātir* narrations. The "Seven" became popular because 'Allāmah Ibn Mujāhid had compiled a selection of seven of them in a book. He neither meant that recitation of the Qurān was limited to those

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123: Ibn Jazarī: An-Nuishr fil Qirat v1, p21.Damascus, 1345 AH.
124: Ibid.
125: Mutawātir: a report of a large number of narrators whose agreement on a lie is inconceivable. The condition is met in the entire line of transmission from the origin to the last narrator. *Tawātur*: (consecutive.)

variations nor did he intend to elucidate the seven readings through the seven recitals.

2: On the same basis some scholars have opined that 'readings' include all the different recitals, but the word 'seven' does not specify the number seven. It means 'many'. The word 'seven' is very often used in Arabic language to denote excess of something. Here also the *Ḥadith* does not intend that the 'Readings' on which the Qurān is revealed are specifically seven, but it denotes that the Qurān is revealed in 'many' readings. Of the earlier scholars, Qaḍi 'Ayāḍ رحمة الله عليه held the same view,[126] and in the latest period Shāh Wali-ullāh upheld the same opinion.[127]

But this view does not seem to be correct because Bukhāri and Muslim have quoted Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ saying that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say:

اقرأني جبريلُ على حرف فراجعته، فلم ازل استزيده و يزيدني حتى انتهى الى سبعة احرفٍ۔

Jibrīl taught me the Qurān in one reading but I turned to him and did not cease asking him to allow more until he ended up at seven readings.[128]

The tradition is reported in detail in Muslim on the authority of Ubayy bin Ka'b ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ was sitting by the pond of Banu Ghifār.

فأتاه جبرئيل عليه السلام فقال ان الله يأمرك ان تقرأ امتك القران

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126: Awjaz al-Masālik īlā Muwaṭṭā Imām Mālik v2. p56. Saharanpur Press, 1350 AH.

127: Muṣaffa Sharah Muwaṭṭā v1 p187. Fārūqi Press, Delhi, 1293 AH.

128: Manāhil al-'Irfān, v1, p133.

على حرف، فقال أسأل الله معافاته و مغفرته وان امتى لا تطيق ذلك ـ ثم اتاه الثانية فقال ان الله يأمرك ان تقرأ امتك القران على حرفين فقال اسال الله معافاته ومغفرته و ان امتى لا تطيق ذلك، ثم جاء ته الثالثة فقال ان الله يامرك ان تقرأ امتك القران على ثلاثة احرف فقال اسال الله معافاته و مغفرته و ان امتى لاتطيق ذلك ثم جاء ه الرابعة فقال: ان الله يأمرك ان تقرأ امتك القران على سبعة احرفٍ فايما حرف قرء وا عليه فقد أصابوا ـ "

So Jibril ﷺ came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "Allah has commanded you that all your people should recite the Quran following one method of reading." On that he said, "I seek the forgiveness of Allah, my people do not have the ability to do so." Then Jibril came to him again and said, "Allah has commanded that your people recite the Quran following two readings." He said, "I seek the forgiveness of Allah, my people do not have the ability to do even that" then he came a third time and said, "Allah has commanded you that your people should read the Quran following three readings." The Prophet ﷺ again said, "I seek forgiveness from Allah, my people have no ability for that too." Then Jibrīl ﷺ came a fourth time and said, "Allah has commanded you to let your people recite the Quran following seven readings." Hence whichever recital they would follow will be correct.[129]

The context of these narrations indicates clearly

129:Manāhil ul 'Irfān, v1, p133.

that the word 'seven' does not denote an unspecified large number but it denotes the exact quantity 'seven'. Hence, in the light of these narrations this view (that seven means more than that) does not hold good and the majority of scholars reject it.

Some other scholars, including Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr Tabarī and others have stated that, in this Tradition, the seven readings indicate the seven dialects of the Tribes of Arabia. The Arabs belonged to different tribes and the language of each tribe, in spite of being Arabic, had a slightly different dialect. It was as usually occurs with a major language that several dialects naturally evolve on regional basis. Hence, for the conve nience of different tribes, Allah revealed the Qurān on seven dialects so that every tribe may read it according to its own dialect.[130] Imām Abu Ḥātim Sijistānī رحمة الله عليه has even enumerated the names of these tribes and has stated that the Qurān was revealed in the dialects of these seven tribes. They are: Quraysh, Ḥuzayl, Taymur Rabāb, Azd, Rabī'ah, Hawāzin and S'ad bin Bakr. And Ḥāfiz Ibn Abdul Barr has relied upon some authorities to name the tribes thus: Ḥuzayl, Kinānah, Dabbah, Taymur Rabāb Asad bin Khuzaimah and Quraysh.[131]

However, many researchers, such as Ḥāfiz Ibn 'Abdul Barr, 'Allāmah Suyūṭi and 'Allāmah Ibnul Jazarī have refuted this view due to certain reasons.

First, the number of Arabian tribes was quite large, why should seven be selected? Secondly, there was a disagreement between Sayyidina Umar ﷺ and Sayyidina Hishām bin Hakīm ﷺ on the correct recital of the Qurān. This is reported in Saḥīḥ Bukhāri in detail, although both of

130: Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr v1, p15.
131: Fath al Bāri v9, p22 and Rūhul Ma'āni v1, p 21.

them were of the Quraysh and the Prophet ﷺ confirmed that both were correct and said that the Quran had been revealed on seven readings. If seven readings were meant to denote dialects of the seven different tribes there should have been no difference in the views of 'Umar ﷺ Hishām.[132] 'Allāmah Ālūsi has, however, stated that it was possible that the Prophet ﷺ might have taught the Quran to one of them on a dialect different from the Quraysh dialect[133] But this argument is weak because the purpose of revelation of the Quran in different dialects was to make its rectital easy for every tribe, hence it does not conform to the Prophetic wisdom to teach the Quran to a Quraysh in a different dialect.

Apart from this, Imām Ṭaḥāvī has raised another objection that, if the seven readings corresponded to tribes, then it is in contradiction to the Quranic proclamation.

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهٖ

And We have sent no Messenger but with the lauguage of his people. (Surah Ibrahim, 14:4)

There is no doubt that the Prophet's people were the Quraysh, hence it is apparant that the Quran was revealed in the dialect of the Quraysh only.[134] This view of Imām Ṭaḥāvi is supported by the fact that when Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ intended to gather the Quran a second time and formed a committee comprising the Companions headed by Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ for this purpose, he instructed them,

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132: An-Nashr fil Qirat ul-'Ashr v1, p.25 and Fatḥul Bārī v9, p23.
133: Rūhul Ma'ānī v1, p21.
134: Ṭaḥāvi Mushkil ul-Āthār v4, p185-186 Daira-tul Ma'arif, Daccan 1333 AH.

إِذَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْقُرْآنِ فَاكْتُبُوهُ بِلِسَانِ قُرَيْشٍ فَإِنَّمَا نَزَلَ بِلِسَانِهِمْ.

"If you differ about any point of dialect in Quran you should adopt the dialect of Quraysh because the Quran has been revealed in their language.[135]

Sayyidina 'Uthman ﷺ made it clear that the Quran has been revealed only in the language of Quraysh. The question then arises why should there be a difference among them? This would be discussed in detail further on.

Apart from this, the proponents of this view hold that "Seven" and "Recital" are two separate things. The variations in its recital which exist even today belong to one dialect only, which is the language of the Quraysh. The other dialects were either abrogated or eliminated for some valid reason. On this question, among the several doubts one observes that in the entire collection of *Aḥādith*, we do not find any proof that there were two kinds of differences in the recital of the Quran, one pertaining to 'Seven Dialects and the other pertaining to the words of 'Recital'. In fact wherever a difference in the words of the Quran has been mentioned it is referred to as dialect difference. Difference in recital is not mentioned as a separate difference. For these reasons this view also serves as a weak argument.

4: The fourth popular view is that of Imām Ṭaḥāvi. According to him, the Quran was revealed only in the dialect of Quraysh but because the people of Arabia belonged to different regions and different tribes and it was very difficult for all of them to recite it in one dialect, hence in the beginning they were permitted to recite it in

135:Bukhāri: Compilation of the Quran.

synonymous words of their language. Thus the Prophet ﷺ had himself suggested synonmous for those people who could not recite the Quran in the original words correctly. These synonyms were chosen from the dialects of both, the Quraysh and non-Quraysh. Such as, instead of تعال words like هلم ، اقبل ، ادن could be read because they had the same meaning. But this permission was given in the early days of Islam when all Arabs were not fully acquainted with the language of the Quran. But gradually, this language gained more circulation and the people of Arabia got used to it. They found it easy to recite in the original diction of Quran. In the month of Ramadan before his death, the Prophet ﷺ sat with Jibril ﷺ for the final Revision of the Quran. This is known as *Ardul Akhirah* (the Final Revision). The use of synonyms was thereafter disallowed and only the original diction of the Quran remained.[136]

According to this view the tradition relating to "Seven Dialects" pertained only to the period when the use of synonyms was permissible in the recitation of the Quran, and it did not mean that the Quran was revealed in seven dialects. But that it has been revealed with a flexibility that for a certain period it could be recited in seven dialects and even that did not mean that they were permitted to use seven synonyms with every word of the Quran, but that the maximum number of synonyms that could be used was seven. Further, this relaxation did not mean that everybody was free to choose the synonyms of his own choice, but the words were chosen by the Prophet ﷺ himself, and he taught the Quran to everyone in the diction that was easy for him. Hence only those synonyms were permitted that were proved from Prophet ﷺ.[137]

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136:Mushkil-ul-Āthār Tahāvi v4, p186-191.
137:Fathul Bāri, v9, pp22, 23.

Apart from Imām Ṭaḥāvi, Sufyan bin 'Uyainah رحمة الله عليه and Ibn Wahb رحمة الله عليه also subscribe to this view. Ḥāfiz Ibn 'Abdul Barr رحمة الله عليه goes on to attribute the view to most scholars.[138]

This view appears to be more logical than all the other views and its advocates present as an argument the following narration of Abu Bakr ﷺ as quoted in Musnad Ahmed.

ان جبرئيل قال يا محمد(ﷺ)اقرأ القران على حرف، قال ميكائيل استزده حتى بلغ سبعة احرف، قال كل شافٍ كافٍ مالم تخلط اية عذاب برحمة اورحمة بعذاب، نحو قولك تعال و اَقْبِلْ و هَلُمَّ واذْهَبْ وأسْرِعْ و عَجِّلْ۔

Jibril ﷺ said to the Prophet ﷺ "O Muḥammad read the Quran on one diction." Mika-il ﷺ said to the Prophet ﷺ to get the number increased, till the matter reached upto seven. Jibril ﷺ then said, "Each of these is sufficient unless you mix the verses of punishment with those of rewards and vice versa. It will be the same as you express the meaning of تعال (come) with اسرع، اذهب، هلم، اقبل and عجل.

There may not be doubt on this view any more but a confusion exists and it does not explain the positon of different recitals of the Quran which continue to this day. Even this theory does not account for it. If these recitals are treated as something different from "Seven Dialects" solid arguments will be needed to prove it. In the vast collection of *Aḥādith*, we do not find any mention of difference in the Quran other than in the Reading. How then may we explain differences in Reading and Dialect. I have not been able to find a satisfactory answer to this

138:Sharah Muwaṭṭa v.2 p.11, Zarqāni. Al Maktaba al Tijāratul Kubrā Egypt 1355 AH.

confusion with the advocates of this theory.

## MOST ACCEPTABLE EXPLANATION OF SEVEN READINGS

In our view the best explanation and interpretation of the Seven Dialects of Qurān is that it means "Variation in Recital". The seven dialects refer to variations in the recital of the Qurān of seven kinds. Hence although the recitals are more than seven yet the variations found in them evolve arround seven basic points. (We will explain that later on.)

To the best of our knowledge this view was first propounded by Imām Mālik. The renowned commentator of the Qurān Nizamuddin Qummi Nishapuri has written in his Tafsīr Gharā'ib ul-Qurān that Imām Mālik believed that the seven Readings denoted the following seven variations in the recital of the Qurān:

1: **Variation in numbers**, so that one word is read as singular in one recital and plural in another recital, for example, و تمت كلمة ربك and كلمات ربك.[139]
2: **Variation in gender**, that is a masculine word in one recital becomes feminine in the other, for example لا يقبل becomes لا تقبل.[140]
3: **Variations in placement of diacritical marks**, the *Kasrah* and *fathah* are changed, e.g. هل من خالق غيرُ الله becomes هل من خالق غيرِ الله.[141]
4: **Variations in verb** for example يعرشون becomes يُعرِّشون.[142]
5: **Variations in syntax**, for example لكنّ الشياطين becomes لكنِ الشياطين.[143]
6: **Variations caused by transposition**, for example,

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139: Kalimatu Rabbik (The word of your Lord), and Kalimātu Rabbik (The words of your Lord.)
140: La yuq-balu and Lā-tuqbalu.
141: Ghayrullāhi and Ghayrillāhi.
142: Ya'ar ri-shūn and Yu'ar ri-shūn.
143: Lākin-nash-shayātīn and Lakinash-shayātīnu.

تعلمون becomes يعلمون and نَنْشِزُهَا becomes نَنْشُرُهَا .[144]

7: **Variations of pronunciation or accent.**[145] Variations in *tafkhīm, tarqīq, imalah, madd, qaṣr, iẓhār, idghām* rendering sound heavy, soft, inclining it, prolonging, shortening, expressing clearly and assimilating).

Further, the same view has been adopted by 'Allāmah Ibn Qutaybah, Imām Abul Faḍl Rāzī, Qaḍī Abu Bakr bin At-Ṭayyib Bāqillānī, Ibn Jazarī.[146] Ibnul Jazarī, the renowned scholar of Recital of the Qurān, has also stated in connection with this *Ḥadith* "I remained in doubt about this tradition and pondered over it for more than thirty years till Allah, the Almighty, uncovered for me its explanation that will be correct, if Allah wills it".[147]

All these scholars are in agreement that by seven Dialects in this *Ḥadith* is meant the seven forms of the variations in recital, but there is some difference in the formulation of those variations because each of them has arranged them independently. Of these the one whose enlistment is the most concise, well arranged and firmly established is Imām Abul-Faḍl Rāzī. According to him, Variations in Recital of the Qurān depend on seven kinds:

1: *Variations in nouns:* This includes difference in number and gender e.g. تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ has also been read as تَمَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ .

2: *Variations in verbs:* The same verb is read in the past present or future tense, or as an imperative, for example رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بين اسفارنا has also been read as: رَبُّنَا بَعَّدَ بين اسفارنا

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144: Y'a la mūn and t'a la mūn and Nunshuzuhā and Nanshuruhā.

145: Gharā'i-bul Qurān wa Raghā'ibul Furqān, Al-Nishapurī Hāmish Ibn Jarīr v,1 p21.

146: The opinion of Ibn Quṭaybah, Abul Faḍl Rāzi, and Ibn Jazari are found in Fatḥ ul Bārī v9 pp 25-26 and al-Itqān v.1 p.47 and of Qādī Ibn Al-Ṭayyib in Tafsīr al-Qurtabi v1., p45.

147: An-Nashr fil Qir'āt al-'Ashr v1, p26.

3: *Variations in the position of diacritical marks.* There is a variance in I'rāb the Kasrah, fatḥah, ḍammah: ذُوالْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدُ and لَايُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ become وَلَا يُضَارُّ كَاتِبٌ become ذُوالْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدِ .

4: *Variations Caused by Omissions and additions:* There is an extra word in a reading which is not found in another. For example وما خلق الذكر والانثى is والذكر والانثى in another تجرى تحتها الانهر is تجرى من تحتها الانهار in another.

5: *Variations of placement of words:*
A word precedes in a reading while it follows in another, e.g. وجاءت سكرة الموت بالحق becomes جاءت سكرة الحق بالموت.

6: *Variations caused by replacement of words:*
There is a word in one reading but quite another word in the other reading, e.g. نُنْشِزُهَا becomes نُنْشِرُهَا and فتبيّنوا is فتثبّتوا and طلح is طلع.

7: *Variations of accent:* It rests round changes in *tafkhīm*, *tarqīq*, *imālah*, *qaṣr*, *madd*, *hamz*, *iẓhār* and *idghām* (e.g Mūsā read with Imalah becomes like mūsay)[148]

The scheme of Imām Abul Faḍl Rāzī appears more comprehensive as compared to that of 'Allāmah Ibnul Jazarī, 'Allāmah Ibn Qutaybah and Qāḍi Abu Ṭayyib in that no variation has been left out in this. Contrary to this, the schemes of the other three scholars do not contain the last mentioned variation (of accent). In Imām Mālik's scheme we do find mention of variations of accent, but we do not find adequate clarrification of variance, for example, their addition or omission, prefixing or suffixing, and replacement of words. Imām Abul Faḍl's description takes account of all these differences. Imām Jazari who spent more than thirty years pondering over the seven readings has also quoted this scheme with great emphasis and no objection has been raised by him. Rather, taking his view

148:Fathul Bārī, v9, p24.

as a whole it appears that he prefers Imām Abul Fadl's scheme to his own[149] Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar has also preferred this scheme, because he has reproduced the views of 'Allāmah Qutaybah and remarked, "This is good reasoning." Then he has described the seven kinds of variations of Imām Abul Faḍl and remarked, قلت و قد اخذ كلام ابن قتيبة و نقحه "I think that by adopting Ibn Qutaybah's verdict Imām Abul Faḍl has further polished it."[150] Shaikh Abdul 'Aẓim Zarqāni has also adopted the same view and given arguments in its support.[151]

The scholars, Imām Mālik, Ibn Qutaybah, Abul Faḍl Rāzi, Ibnul Jazarī and Qaḍi Bāqillānī agree that the seven Dialects in the *Ḥadith* refer to the seven kinds of difference in Reading.

In my humble opinion this is the best explanation of the seven Dialects. The intention of *Ḥadith* also appears that the words of the Qurān may be read in different ways, and these different ways are seven in number. Since there is no specification of these seven variations in any *Ḥadith* it cannot be said with certainty about any scheme that it conforms to the intention of the *Hadith*, but apparently the scheme of Imām Abul Fadl Rāzi is more correct because it is applicable to the various forms of recitals current to-date.

## REASONS FOR PREFERENCE

Of several explanations of the seven Dialects in *Ḥadith*, exegesis or Books on the sciences of the Qurān that we have come across, we prefer this opinion that the phrase refers to the seven basic points of variation in the recital of the Qurān. Our reasons for it are:

1: According to this view, we do not have to consider

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149: An-nashr-fil-qirā'at 'Ashr v1, p27,28.

150: Fat-ḥul Bārī, v9, p24.

151: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān fi 'ulūm-il-Qurān v1, pp154 to 156.

Dialects and Recitals as two separate things. A common problem in the views of 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr and Imām Ṭaḥāvi is that we accept that two kinds of differences existed in the recital of the Qurān, one pertaining to dialect (or ahruf) and the other to recital and that the former was abrogated but the latter persists. But we do not find even a weak tradition in the vast collection of *Aḥādith* to show that Dialects and Recital are two separate things. The *Aḥādith* mention only variation in dialect. (ahruf) and it is for this word that the term "Recital" has been extensively used. If the Recital were something different from these there must have been some indication in the Traditions.

Why is it that Tawātar *Aḥādith* pertaining to variations in Dialect may be found, but there is no mention of variation in Recital as distinguished from those *Aḥādith*?

How can it be possible to say, just on conjecture, that apart from the variations of dialect there was yet another type of variation in the words of the Qurān?

In the foregoing proposition this difficulty is totally eliminated because it uses the terms Dialect and Recitals as one and the same thing, say synonymously.

2: If we accept the view of 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr then we have to assume that six out of seven renderings have been abrogated or have become obsolete and only the Quraysh version continues. The present recitals are variations of that. The difficulties in accepting this view shall be discussed in detail subsequently. In the preferred view, however, there are no such defects because, according to it, all the seven renderings remain safe and existent even today.

3: According to the preferred view the meaning of Seven Dialects is undisputed while we have to resort to conjectures in the meaning of 'ahruf' or in the

numerical value of Seven in the other propositions.

4: Of the views of all the scholars that have come before us, the most renowned person and in proximity to the Prophetic era is that of Imām Mālik, and according to 'Allāmah Nīshāpūrī رحمة الله عليه shares the same view.

5: 'Allāmah Ibn Qutaydah رحمة الله عليه and Ibn ul Jazari رحمة الله عليه are both well recongnised authorities on the subject of Qir'āt (Recitals), and both of them uphold the same view. It has already been mentioned that the latter came to this conclusion after giving it due thought and consideration for thirty years.

## OBJECTIONS TO THIS VIEW AND THEIR REPLIES

Let us now see what objections may be raised on this view and what have been raised.

The first objection raised against this view is that all the variations described under this depend on grammatical classification, but at the time when the Prophet ﷺ pronounced this *Ḥadith*, such grammatical classifications and phrases were not known, and most people did not even know reading and writing. Under the circumstances it is difficult to cite these variations as the seven Dialects.

Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar has replied to this objection in the following words:

ولا يلزم من ذلك توهين ما ذهب اليه ابن قتيبة لا حتمال ان يكون الانحصار المذكور فى ذلك وقع اتفاقًا و انما اطلع عليه بالاستقراء وفى ذلك من الحكمة البالغة مالا يخفى۔

From this the weakness of Ibn Qutaybah's view does not necessarily arise, because it is possible that the said reliance may have occurred by chance and became

known through reasoning for induction, and the prudence therein is not a secret.

In our humble comprehension, it is true that these grammatical terms were not in usage during the Prophetic era, and perhaps that was the reason why the Prophet ﷺ did not elaborate the meaning of Seven Dialects. But this is obvious that the basis did exist even at that time although they may not have been given grammatical terms. One should not wonder if the Prophet ﷺ himself had recongnised the terms and divided the variation into seven basic points. If the details of the seven reasons for variations were described at that time it might have been beyond common comprehension. Hence, rather than go into details he explained that the reasons for variations were seven. Later on when these terms came into use, the learned scholars described the causes of variations in relevant words and phrases. As we have already said, it is difficult to define any one proposition as the one that conforms to the intentions of the Prophet ﷺ. However different people conclude that the reasons for variations even though their details may not exactly be the same as established by these scholars, particularly when no other rational explanation of the 'Seven Dialects' can be reasonably given.

## WHAT IS THE EASE CREATED BY SEVEN RENDERINGS

2: The second objection to this view can be that since the Qurān was revealed on seven recitations to make its recital easy for the people this would hold true with the view of 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr. There were people belonging to different tribes in Arabia and it was difficult for one tribe to read according to the dialect of the other. But according to Imām Mālik, Rāzī and

Ibnul Jazari all seven letters belonged to the Quraysh dialect and it remains ambiguous as to why the variations of recital were allowed to continue when the Qurān was meant to be revealed in only one dialect?

This objection is based on the idea that the Prophet ﷺ asked for the facility of reciting the Qurān on seven letters in view of the variations in the dialects of various tribes, and it was for this reason that Ibn Jarīr termed the Seven Dialects as "Seven Dialects of Arabia". But this is a thing that is not supported by any *Ḥadith*. On the other hand, in one of his narrations the Prophet ﷺ has clearly elucidated what was in his mind when seeking the facility of seven letters. Imām Tirmizī has quoted Ubayy bin Ka'b with authentic evidences:

لقی رسول اللّٰہ صلی اللّٰہ علیہ و سلم جبریل عند احجار المرا
فقال رسول اللّٰہ صلی اللّٰہ علیہ و سلم لجبریل:
انی بعثت الی امة امیین فیهم الشیخ الفانی والعجوز الکبیرة والغلام،
قال فمرهم فلیقرؤا القرآن علٰی سبعة احرف۔

(النشر فی القراءات ص۲۰ ج۱)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ met Jibril عليه السلام near the rocks of Marwah. He said to Jibril عليه السلام, "I have been sent to an unlettered nation which comprises the aged nearing their graves, elderly women and also children." Jibril عليه السلام said, "Ask them to recite the Qurān on seven *ahruf*."[152]

In another tradition of Tirmizi again, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have siad to Jibril عليه السلام:

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152. An Nashr-fil-qirāatul 'ashr, v1, p20.

انی بعثت الی امة امیین منهم العحوز والشیخ والکبیر والغلام
والحارية والذی لم یقرأ کتاباًقط (جامع الترمذی، ص۱۳۸، قرآن محل کراچی)

"I have been sent to an unlettered nation wherein there are elderly women, old men and aged people, and also boys and girls and also people who have never read a book."[153]

The words of this *Ḥadith* explain very clearly that the Prophet ﷺ had in view that he was sent to an unlettered and illiterate people who included different age groups and types. If only one method of recital was fixed it could have created problems for them. On the other hand, if several alternatives were available it would become possible that a person not being able to recite with one method may utter the same words in a different style. This will enable them to perform their *Salah* correctly. Often it happens that aged men or eldery women or illiterate persons get used to a word in a particular accent or phonation, and for them even a minor variation of a diacritical mark may be a difficulty. That is why the Prophet ﷺ sought this facility, for example, if a person cannot easily express it in the unfamiliar form of another dialect, or if somebody is unable to recite singular easily he may read it as plural, if somebody finds one accent difficult he may use the other accent available. In this way the reader will have seven options available to him.

You might have noted that in this *Ḥadith* the Prophet ﷺ while seeking the facility of seven readings, did not request it to facilitate different tribes but he had age groups and illiteracy in mind, but contrary to this he expressed his concern on differences in their ages and their being

153. Jam'e Tirmizi, v2, p138 Qurān Maḥal, karachi.

illiterate. This clearly proves that the basic reason of giving the facility of seven readings was not the dialectical differences of the various tribes but it was illiteracy among the people in general so that they could benefit from it.

3. The third objection could be that the seven variations of the recital of Qurān, are in any case conjectural and hypothetical. This can be said of the opinions of all of them including Mālik, Abul Faḍl Rāzī, 'Allāmah Ibn Qutaybah, Ibnul Jazari or Qaḍi Ibn ut-Ṭayyib. That is why each of them has described the details of the seven causes of variations separately. How then can we say about any of them that they conformed to the Prophet's ﷺ sayings?

The answer to this objection is that we do not find an explicit clarification of "Seven Dialects" in any *Ḥadith* or narration of the Companions. Hence, the inference has been drawn from a collective study of all the narrations available. Thus, as an accepted thing this view seems to be nearer to reality than others because no basic objection arises out of this. Judging from this standard, we feel almost certain that the phrase "*Seven Aḥruf*" in this Tradition means the seven forms of variations in recital of the Qurān. As for specifying and determining these forms, we have already stated that there is no other way of doing it except reasoning through induction. That deduced by Imām Abul Faḍl Rāzī appears to us as comprehensive but we cannot say with certainty that the Prophet ﷺ meant exactly the same thing, but this does not deny that by "Seven Ahruf" Prophet ﷺ meant the seven variations in recital. We have neither the means to gain the exact cognizance of its details nor is it necessary.

4. The fourth objection to this view may be raised that it takes into consideration only the words and differences in the variations in their expressions, Their meanings have not

been dealt with, even though there is a narration according to which "Seven Dialects" mean "Seven kinds of meanings." Imām Ṭaḥāvi has quoted 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd as saying that the Prophet ﷺ said:

كان الكتاب الاول ينزل من باب واحد على حرف واحد ونزل القران من سبعة ابواب علىٰ سبعة احرف زاجر وامر وحلال و حرام و محكم ومتشابه وامثال ..........الخ

Formerly the Book used to be revealed in one chapter on one letter and the Qurān has been revealed in seven chapters on seven letters. The seven letters are Zājir (that which restricts), Āmir (that which commands), Ḥalāl (permissible), Ḥarām (Prohibited), Muḥkam (Established), Muta-shābeh (Exact meaning not known), and Amthāl (Examples).

It is on this evidence that certain scholars have attributed the Seven Letters to seven kinds of meanings.

But the above Tradition is based on weak precedents. Imām Ṭaḥāvi has stated about this Tradition that it is reported by Abu Salamah as a narration from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, but Abu Salamah never met 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.[154]

Apart from this, explaining all such views attributed to earlier scholars Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī says that these expressions were not made as an interpretation of the *Ḥadith* on "Seven dialects" but they meant to say that the Qurān consisted of this type of subjects.

As for those who have commented on the *Ḥadith* itself, their opinion is patently wrong. Anyone with a rudiment of understanding will know on casting a superficial glance on

154: Mushkil-ul-Āthār v4, p185.

the other *Aḥādith* that various words do not amount to change in meanings and subjects. They are only variations of words in the recital. That is why none of the scholars on this subject accept this interpretation, rather they have rebutted it.[155]

## ARE THE SEVEN LETTERS STILL PRESERVED OR ARE THEY OBSOLETE?

After having established the meanings of the "Seven Readings" the important thing to know is whether they still exist or not? For this there are three views among the earlier scholars.

## IBN JARĪR'S VIEW:

The first view is that of Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr Ṭabri and his followers.

We have already stated that according to him "Seven Dialects" mean the seven dialects of the tribes of Arabia. On this basis they say that the Qurān was being recited on these seven letters until the time of Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ. But when Islam spread far and wide disputes arose among the people due to their ignorance about the reality of seven versions. Everyone recited the Qurān on different rendering and found fault in the recitals of the other. In order to overcome the problem, Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ consulted the other companions and compiled seven copies of the Qurān only on one version, that is, the language of Quraysh and sent them to the different provinces of the State, and burnt all other copies, so that no dispute might arise. Hence, only the version on the dialect of Quraysh remained and the other six are non-existent. The variations in the recitals which we find today are in fact the different ways of expression of the same Qurayish letter.[156]

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155: For details see Al-Itqān v1, p49, Edn. 16, and An-Nasr-fi-qirā'āt ti l-'ashr, by Ibnul Jazari v1, p25.

156: Tafsīr Ibn-e-Jarīr, v1, p15.

## IBN JARĪR'S POINT OF VIEW AND ITS WEAKNESS

Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī رحمة الله عليه has elaborated upon his view with firm assurance in the preface of his Tafsīr. Therefore, it has become very popular and the term 'Seven dialects' is interpreted in context with this view. But the fact is that most of the research Scholars[157] have not adopted it and have firmly refuted this view, because it involves several complications for which there is no solution.

The first objection to this view is the one that has already been described, that in this the "Letters" and "Recitals" have been treated as two separate things, but this is not supported by any *Ḥadith*.

The second objection is that on the one hand Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr admits that all the seven dialects were divine revelations but, on the other hand, he says that Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ abolished the recital of six letters with the consent of the companions. But it is very difficult to believe that the companions of the Prophet ﷺ would agree to abolish six versions that were revealed by Allah on the request of the Prophet ﷺ for the convenience of people. A consensus of the Companions is, indeed, conclusive in religious doctrines, but it is not imaginable that they would unite to abrogate versions that were part of the Qurān.

Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr has replied to this objection that while the Ummah ﷺ was ordained to guard the Qurān they were given an option that they may adopt whichever of the seven dialects they like. Hence the people took advantage of this option and, for the sake of unanimity, gave up six versions and united on one. These steps were neither meant to abrogate the versions nor to prohibit their recital but to select one only for collective good and unity.

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157: The names of the scholars are given in the following lines.

But this argument is also weak because even though the people as a whole might have adopted one version for its practical purposes they may have let the others remain in records alone. The Qurān says:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

Surely We have revealed Admonition (The Qurān), and surely We are its Guardian. (Al-Ḥijr, 15:9)

If all the seven were letters of the Qurān, this verse would clearly mean that they would be preserved to the Day of Resurrection. Even if someone gives up their recital, they would continue to exist. Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr has advanced the argument that the Qurān has given three options as expiation for making a false vow, namely, free a slave or feed ten poor people or clothe ten poor people. So if the *Ummah* adopts one of them without making other options unlawful, they are allowed to do so. Likewise, the *Ummah* has collectively chosen one version out of seven. But this example cannot hold, because if the people adopt one of the three options of expiation in a manner that although they do not consider the other two as unlawful yet they cast them into extinction so that while it is known that there existed two more options, but with the passage of time they have forgotten what these two options were. Certainly, the *Ummah* would not be entitled to do such a thing.

Further, the question arises as to what was the need to abandon the remaining six versions. Ibn Jarīr has stated that severe disputes were erupting due to the variations of these letters, hence Sayyidina Uthmān رضي الله عنه with consent of the Companions, thought it proper that the whole nation should unite on one version. But this argument is also unacceptable. Differences among the Muslims due to these variations had come up even during the time of the Prophet

ﷺ. The *Aḥādith* recount several instances of one companion arguing with another who recited the Qurān with a reading different from his own. So much so that Bukhāri carries a *Ḥadith* that Sayyidina Umar ؓ dragged Sayyidina Hishām bin Ḥākim bin Ḥizam with a sheet round his neck and took him to the Prophet ﷺ (due to similar difference in recital). And Sayyidina Ubayy bin Ka'ab states that he entertained serious doubts on account of variations in Readings. But on such occasions the Prophet ﷺ did not abrogate the seven versions; rather, he informed them of the concession allowed in recital so that no mischief or unrest arose. It cannot the said of the Companions that instead of following the Tradition of the Prophet ﷺ they would have abrogated six letters.

Further, what is strange is that according to Ibn Jarīr the Companions abolished six dialects for fear of disputes but retained the recitals which, according to him, were different from dialects and they are still preserved although sometimes one word could be rendered in several ways. The question arises that if the disputes and wranglings were anticipated due to variations of dialect, could they not be anticipated also due to variations of recital ? If the intention behind abolishing six dialects was only to create unity among Muslims and that they all read the Qurān in one manner, why were the variations of recitals not removed? When disruption among Muslims could be checked despite different recitals and they could be persuaded that recital of the Qurān was permissible in all these manners, why the same policy was not adopted for variations in Dialect? If we accept the view of Ibn Jarīr we would have to accuse the Companions for adopting a double standard, for seven Dialects and Recitals. And this cannot be justified.

Then, the attribution of such a step to Sayyidina Uthmān ؓ and other Companions is not based on any

authentic Tradition. But, it is deduced through ambiguous words. The narratives that describe the incident of compilation of the Qurān by Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ do not say that he had abrogated six dialects. In fact, there are evidences against it which we will see later. So, how may we infer that the Companions tolerated the abrogation and wiping out of the six dialects that Prophet ﷺ had repeatedly requested and was allowed, particularly when we have no *Ḥadith* to support the inference.

Surely, the Companions were hesitant even to undertake the noble task of compilation of the Qurān just because this was not done by the Prophet ﷺ, and they had spent their lives in safeguarding every word of the Qurān, and had preserved even the abrogated verses separately for the *Ummah* for their historical importance. These Companions could not be expected to unite to eradicate the six dialects in a manner that they become quite extinct. What reason could there be that we do not find a single example even in the weak Traditions about the "Letters" which Ibn Jarīr himself admits, were not abrogated but only their recital and writing was abolished as an expedient measure?

That is why most research scholars have refuted the view of Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr Tabarī.

## IMĀM ṬAḤĀVĪ'S VIEW

2. The other view is that of Imām Ṭaḥāvī رحمة الله عليه that has been discussed earlier. According to this view the Qurān was revealed in only the dialect of the Quraysh but to facilitate its recital, people were permitted to use synonyms not exceeding seven in number. Even these synonyms were specified by the Prophet ﷺ and it is this relaxation that has been described in *Hadith* as revelation of the Qurān on "Seven Ahrūf." But this was permitted only in the early days of Islam and later on when people were

used to the language of Qurān, it was abrogated by the Prophet ﷺ himself. This was done after the Prophet ﷺ revised the Qurān with Jibril ﷺ in the last Ramaḍan of his life. Now only the original language exists, that is the dialect of the Quraysh in which the Qurān was revealed.

This view seems better than that of Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr in that the abolition of six dialects has not been attributed to the Companions but to the Prophet ﷺ. However,the difficulty arises that according to this view the six dialects were not revealed by Allah, although there is the incident when there was a dispute between Sayyidina Hishām and Sayyidina Umar ؓ, the former recited *Surah Al-Furqān* on a dialect before the Prophet ﷺ and he said هكذا انزلت (This *Surah* has been revealed as recited). Then Sayyidina Umar ؓ recited it in another dialect and the Prophet ﷺ said again هكذا انزلت (This *Surah* has been revealed as recited). This proves that both the dialects were parts of Divine revelations.

Besides, as has been stated earlier this view also does not state clearly what the status of recitals is: whether they form part of the seven dialects or not. If they were included in them it will be like saying that like the six letters they were not Divine revelations, but this is preposterous. If they were not included therein, then we have no proof to identify them as distinct from the seven dialects. Hence this view also does not appeal.

## MOST ACCEPTABLE VIEW

3: The third and the most satisfactory and unstained view is nothing but that the 'Seven ahruf' distinction is the same as different causes of the various Readings, which have been mentioned in the preceding pages. Therefore, the seven dialects are preserved even today and continue to be recited. However in the early days of Islam the varieties of

Recital were many more as was the use of synonymous words. This was allowed to accommodate those who found difficulty with the language of the Qurān. As people became used to it, the different synonyms were withdrawn. So that many of the Readings stood abrogated by the time the Prophet ﷺ recited the Qurān for the last time before Jibril ﷺ (known as the Final Recital or Review) as we will see later. However, the Readings that were not abrogated continue to this day. They are recital even today.

In the complex discussion of the "Seven Dialects" this is the clear approach that allows all narrations in Prophetic traditions to fit in their places nicely. There remains no objection or difference and there is no confusion either. In the subsequent pages we shall present answers to possible doubts so that the truth will become clear. But let us first see the names and references of those scholars who have adopted this view that has refuted the view of Ibn Jarīr.

## SUPPORTERS OF THIS VIEW

Ḥāfiz Abul Khair Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī (died 833 A.H.), who is known as the Great Imām of Qira'āt (Recital) and was a student of Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr in *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), and was a teacher of Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar, has written in his book 'An-Nashr-fil-Qirāāt il 'Ashr".

"اما كون المصاحف العثمانية مشتملة على جميع
الاحرف السبعة فان هذه مسئلة كبيرة اختلف العلماء فيها فذهب
جماعات من الفقهاء والقرّاء والمتكلمين الى ان المصاحف
العثمانية مشتملة على جميع الأحرف السبعة و بنوا ذلك على انه

لا یجوز علی الامۃ ان تھمل نقل شیء من الحروف السبعۃ التی نزل القران بھا و قد اجمع الصحابۃ رض علی نقل المصاحف العثمانیۃ من الصحف التی کتبھا ابو بکرؓ و عمرؓ وارسال کل مصحف منھا الی مصر من امصار المسلمین واجمعوا علی ترک ما سوی ذلک، قال ھؤلاء ولا یجوزان ینھی عن القراءۃ ببعض الاحرف السبعۃ ولا ان یجمعوا علی ترک شیء من القران، و ذھب جماھیر العلماء من السلف والخلف و ائمۃ المسلمین الی ان ھذہ المصاحف العثمانیۃ مشتملۃ علی ما یحتملہ رسمھا فقط جامعۃ للعرضۃ الاخیرۃ التی عرضھا النبی صلی اللہ علیہ و سلم علی جبرئیل علیہ السلام متضمنۃ لھا لم تترک حرفاً منھا، قلت و ھذا القول ھوالذی یظھر صوابہ لان الاحادیث الصحیحۃ والاحاد المشھورۃ المستفیضۃ تدل علیہ و تشھد لہ "۔

"As far the question whether the Qurān and its copies that were compiled by Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ comprised all the seven versions or not, is a great problem on which there are differences among the scholars. The view of jurists among Reciters is that they consisted of all seven letters. They base their opinion on the premise that it would be unlawful to give up reproducing any of the seven Readings on which the Qurān was revealed, and the companions had collectively copied them from those written by Abu Bakr and 'Umar رضی اللہ تعالی عنھما, and one copy each of it was sent to different cities of the Muslim world. Simultaneously, they arrived at a

consensus to disregard all the other scattered material. They assert that neither is it lawful that the recital of any letter out of the seven be abolished nor that the Companions decide to give up any part of the Qurān. The majority of earlier scholars and their successors hold the same view that the compilations by Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ consisted of all those letters that could merge in their script. And all the letters of the last revision of the Qurān by the Prophet ﷺ with Jibril ﷺ are included in these Books, and no letter has been left out. I think that this view is authentic and in conformity with accepted traditions.[158]

And 'Allāma Badruddin 'Aynī has said:

واختلف الاصوليون هل يُقرأ اليوم على سبعة أُحرف فمنعه الطبريؒ وغيره و قال انما يجوز بحرف واحد اليوم وهو حرف زيدؓ و نحیٰ اليه القاضی ابوبکرؒ، و قال ابوالحسن الاشعریؒ اجمع المسلمون على انه لا يجوز حظر ما وسعه اللّٰه تعالیٰ من القراءة بالاحرف التی انزلها اللّٰه تعالیٰ ولا يسوغ للامة ان تمنع ما يطلقه اللّٰه تعالیٰ، بل هی موجودة فی قراء تنا مفرقة فی القران غير معلومة فيجوز علی هذا، و به قال القاضی ان يقرأ بكل ما نقله اهل التواتر من غير تمييز حرف من حرف فيحفظ حرف نافع بحرف الكسائی و حمزة ولا حرج فی ذٰلك۔

And[159] there is a difference of opinion among the

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158. Ibn Jazari: An-Nashr fil-qira'āt-ul'ashr, v1, p31.
159: 'Umdat ul-Qārī, Kitābul Khusumāt v2, p258.

scholars whether the Qurān can now be recited on seven letters or not? 'Allāmah Ibn Jarir Ṭabarī has denied it and states that the recital of Qurān today is lawful only on one letter which is the letter of Zayd bin Thābit. And Qadi Abu Bakr is also inclined to the same view. But Imām Abul Ḥasan Ash'arī states that there is a consensus among Muslims that it would not be lawful for anyone to abolish or eradicate the facility provided by Allah by revealing these letters, and the *Ummah* is not authorised to stop a thing that has been permitted by Allah. But the fact is that all the seven letters are included in our present recitals and are included in the Qurān in varied forms, yet specifically they are not known, Thus, their recital is lawful even today, and the same is the view of the Qadī.[160] All the readings that have come down to us through an authentic line of transmission are permitted for recital and even discriminating one from the other is not necessary. Hence, there is no harm if the recital of Nāfe' can be memorised by mixing with that of Kasāī and Ḥamzah.[161]

And 'Allāmah Badruddīn Zarkashī رحمة الله عليه has quoted Qaḍi Abu Bakr رحمة الله عليه as under:

والسابع اختاره القاضى ابو بكر، و قال: الصحيح ان هذه الاحرف السبعة ظهرت واستفاضت عن رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم و ضبطها عنه الائمة واثبتها عثمانؓ والصّحابةؓ فى المصحف"۔

"The seventh view has been adopted by Qadi

160: Ref. Perhaps to Qadi Ayyad.
161: Details may be seen in an-Nashr fil Qir a tul 'Ashr

Abu-Bakr[162] And he has stated: It is correct that these seven Readings have been reported from the Prophet ﷺ and the Imāms ahve preserved them, and Sayyidina Uthmān and companions ﷺ have included them in the Qurān."[163]

And 'Allāmah Ibn Ḥazm has also refuted the view of Ḥafiẓ Ibn Jarīr in very strong words. He has stated that the views about abolishing six Dlialects is totally wrong, and Sayyidina Uthmān ؓ could not have done it even if he had so desired, because the Ḥāfizs were spread to every nook and corner of the Islamic world, Ḥafiz who had committed the seven readings to memory. He writes:

"واما قول من قال ابطل الأحرف الستة فقد كذب من قال ذٰلك ولو فعل عثمانؓ ذلك اواراده لخرج عن الاسلام ولما مطل ساعة بل الاحرف السبعة كلها موجودة عندنا قائمة كما كانت مثبوتة فى القرء ات المشهورة المأثورة"۔

"As for the view that Uthmān abrogated six letters, whoever said it was wrong. If he had done it or intended to do it, he would have been out of the fold of Islam without the delay of a single moment.[164] The fact is that all the seven Readings are fully preserved with us and still used in popular recitals."[165]

And the well-known commentator of Muwattā 'Allāmah Abul Walīd Bājī Māliki رحمة الله عليه (Died 494 A.H.) has

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162: Ref. Perhaps to Qadi Abu Bakr Baqillani.

163: Al-Burhān fi 'Ulūmil Qurān v.p.223.

164: That would have been in case he had abrogased the six Readings. According to Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr he had only given us reading of the six Dialects and he is not worthy of the strong words used.

165: Ibn Hazm: Al fasl fil Malal walhawa wan Naḥl v2, p77-78.

explained the "Seven Versions to be the seven variations of recitals and written as under:"

فان قيل هل تقولون ان جميع هذه السبعة الاحرف ثابتة فى المصحف فان القراءة بجميعها جائزة قيل لهم كذلك نقول، والدليل علٰى صحة ذلك قوله عزوجل إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ، ولا يصح انفصال الذكر المنزل من قراء ته فيمكن حفظه دونها ومما يدل علٰى صحة ما ذهبنا اليه ان ظاهر قول النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم يدل علٰى ان القران انزل علٰى سبعة احرف تيسيراً علٰى من اراد قراء ته ليقرأ كل رجل منهم بما تيسر عليه و بما هو اخف علٰى طبعه و اقرب الٰى لغته لما يلحق من المشقة بذلك المالوف من العادة فى النطق و نحن اليوم مع عجمة السنتنا و بعدنا عن فصاحة العرب أحوج"۔

We are asked if it is our view that all the seven Readings exist even today and hence their recital (according to you) is permissible, then we would emphatically say 'Yes! This is our view, and the proof of its truth is the Word of Allah in the Qurān. انا نحن نزلنا الذكر و انا له لحافظون (Surely We have revealed the Admonition (the Qurān) and surely We are its Guardian Al Hijr 15:9) And the Qurān cannot be separated from its recital in a manner that itself remaining safeguarded its recitals are abolished or become extinct. Another proof of the validity of our view is that the tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ clearly affirms that the Qurān was revealed in seven Readings in order that it be easy for

its readers, best conforming to his nature and be nearest to his dialect. This is because it is difficult to give up or change one's style of conversation of which one has become used to. And today we are more in need of this facility due to the 'Ajmī influence on our language and our alienation from Arabic eloquence."[166]

And Imām Ghazzāli has defined the Qurān in his book "Al-Mustafā" as under.

"ما نقل الينا بين دفتى المصحف على الاحرف السبعة المشهورة نقلًا متواترا"۔

(The discourse that has reached us uninterrupted in accordance with the popular seven Readings bound in two cardboards as the Book.)[167]

It is evident from this that Imām Ghazāli also believed in the perpetual existence of the seven Readings.

And Mulla 'Ali Qārī رحمة الله عليه (died 1014 AH) has written,

"وكانه عليه الصلوٰة والسلام كشف له ان القراءة المتواترة تستقر فى امته على سبع و هى الموجودة الأن المتفق على تواترها والجمهور علٰى ان ما فوقها شاذّ لا يحل القراءة به"۔

And it seems that it was inspired to the Prophet ﷺ that ultimately seven recitals (of the Qurān) will be left among his people. Hence the same are existing today and there is a consensus on their being continuous. And the majority believes that recitals other than these are

166: Abul Walīd Al-Baji Al-Muntaqa Sharah Al-Muwatta v1, p34.
167: Al-Mustafā v1, p65 Egypt 1356 AH.

very rare and thus not permissible."

Here, Mulla 'Ali Qāri is not right in saying that all the recitals other than the seven are rare or extinct, because this has been strongly rebutted by the scholars of Qirā'at,[168] but one thing is evident that according to him the seven versions exist even today.

The view of Shāh Waliullah Muḥaddith Dehlavi has been described earlier, that he attributes the 'seven' to 'many'. In explaining it he has written as under.

> And the argument on the fact that the number 'seven' used in the *Ḥadith* stands for excess and not limitation is that the Imāms have unanimity on ten recitals and of the ten each has two narrations different from each other. In this way the number of recitals has reached up to twenty.[169]

In this phrase although Shāh Waliullah has attributed the number 'seven' to mean an abundance against the views of the majority of scholars (perhaps the dependence of twenty recitals on seven reasons of variations was not clear to him) but one thing is clear that in his view the *Aḥruf* mentioned in the *Ḥadith* are "Recitals" and they have neither been abrogated nor given up, exist even today.

In the latest era, the Imām of Religious Learnings, great Research Scholar of the age and Ḥāfiẓ of *Ḥadith* (knowing *Ḥadith* by heart), 'Allama Anwar Shāh Kashmiri رحمة الله عليه has probed into the details of this *Ḥadith* and brought forth in a nutshell the results of his research which may be considered as the last word in this matter.

We are reproducing the full text of his study in the following lines:

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168: An-Nashra fil Qirāt-il-'Ashr, v1, p33
169. Al-Muṣaffa.

واعلم انهم اتفقوا على انه ليس المراد من سبعة احرف القراءة السبعة المشهورة بان يكون كل حرف منها قراءة من تلك القراءات اعنى انه لا انطباق بين القرائات السبع والاحرف السبعة كما يذهب اليه الوهم بالنظر الى لفظ السبعة فى الموضعين بل بين تلك الاحرف والقراءة عموم و خصوص وجهيٌ، كيف؟ وان القراءات لا تنحصر فى السبعة كما صرح ابن الجزريؒ فى رسالة النشر فى قراءات العشر، و انما اشتهرت السبعة على الالسنة لانها التى جمعها الشاطبیؒ ثم اعلم ان بعضهم فَهِم ان بين تلك الاحرف تغايرا من كل وجه، بحيث لا ربط بينها وليس كذلك، بل قد يكون الفرق بالمجرد والمزيد واخرىٰ بالابواب، ومرة باعتبار الصّيغ من الغائب والحاضر، وطوراً بتحقيق الهمزة و تسهيلها، فكل هذه التغيرات يسيرة كانت او كثيرة حرف برأسه، و غلط من فهم ان هذه الاحرف متغايرة كلها بحيث يتعذر اجتماعها اما انه كيف عددالسبعة فتوجّه اليه ابن الجزریؒ و حقق ان التصرفات كلها ترجع الى السبعة و راجع القسطلانى و الذرقانیؒ، بقى الكلام فى ان تلك الاحرف كلها موجودة او رفع بعضها و بقى البعض فاعلم ان ما قرأه جبرئيل عليه السلام فى العرضة الاخيرة على النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم كله ثابت فى مصحف عثمانؓ ولمّا يتعيّن معنى

الاحرف عند ابن جرير ذهب الى رفع الاحرف الستّ و بقى

واحد فقط (فيض البارى، ص ٣٢١،٣٢٢،ج٣)

"know it well that all the scholars have a consensus on the fact that "Seven Dialects" does not mean the popular seven recitals, and also it is not true that every letter be one of the seven Recitals. This means that "Seven Recitals" and "Seven Dialects" are not the same thing as may be mistaken from the word "Seven" in the first sight. But there is a relation in the generalisation and specification[170] between these Dialects and "Seven Recitals," and how can they be the same when the recitals are not limited to seven as has been explained by 'Allāmah Ibn-Jazari in his *An Nashr fil Qirā'ātil-'Ashr*. However, the word of "Seven Recitals" has become popular because 'Allāmah Shāṭbi had compiled these very "Seven Recitals." Know it further that some people think that there is a total alienation between the seven letters and there is no link among them. In fact it is not so, but sometimes the difference between two letters pertains only to solitary phrase or additional phrase, and sometimes that of conjugation, sometimes that of past and present tenses, and sometimes only that of retaining the (Ḥamzah) and simplifying it. Thus, all

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170. Faiḍ ul-Bārī v.3 pp321-322. Some of the recitals are of the 'Seven Dialects' for instance, all the contriving Readings and some are not from it as the rare ones or the ones without dispute. Some of the differences of the 'Seven Dialects' are not part of the Seven Readings. e.g. the recitals of Imām Ya'qūb, Imām Abu Ja'far and their successors although of the seven Dialects they are not of the seven Readings. (Muḥammad Taqī.)

these variations, big or small, are constant letters, and they are wrong who think that there is a total alienation among the letters and it is impossible for them to be united in one word or senstense. As for the question as to what is meant by the number 'Seven' in the *Ḥadith* this has been answered by Ibn Jazari and he has deduced that this denotes the number of variations. In this matter Qasṭalāni and Zarqāni may also be seen. The only thing now remains is whether all these letters still exist or some of them have been abrogated and only some are existing. So, know it that all such letters exist in the Book compiled by Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ as Jibril ﷺ had recited with the Prophet ﷺ during the revision of the Qurān, and since the meanings of the "Letters" could not be well conceived by Ibn Jarīr he adopted the view that six letters were abolished and only one remains.

Similarly, the well known Researcher of Egypt in the recent times 'Allāmah Zahid-ul-Kauthari (D.1371 AH) writes as under:

والاول رأى القائلين بان الاحرف السبعة كانت فى مبدء الامر ثم نسخت بالعرضة الاخيرة فى عهد النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم فلم يبق الاحرف و احد و رأى القائلين بان عثمان رضى الله تعالٰى عنه، جمع الناس علٰى حرف واحد و منع من الستة الباقية لمصلحة، و اليه نحا ابن جريرٌ و تهيّبه ناسٌ فتابعوه لكن هذا رأى خطير قام ابن حزم باشدّ النكير عليه فى الفصل و فى. الاحكام وله

الحق فى ذلك، و الثانى رأى القائلين بانها هى الاحرف السبعة المحفوظة كما هى فى العرضة الاخيرة، الخ۔[171]

"The first opinion (that the present recital is in fact a composite of different forms of a single letter) is held by those who say that the seven letters existed in the early days of Islam and then they were abolished in the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

Just after the last revision of the Qurān by him with Jibril ﷺ and only one letter was left. The same is the opinion of those who say that Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ had obtained a consensus on one letter and due to some expedient reason abolished the recital of other six letters. Ibn Jarīr holds this view and many a people overawed by him have followed him, but in fact this is a very audacious and dangerous view, which Ibn Hazm has very forcefully refuted in his "Al-Faṣl" and "Al-Eḥkām." He had every authority for this. The second opinion (that the present recital itself is the "Seven Letters") is held by those who say that these are letters which are being preserved safely since the last revision of the Prophet ﷺ with Jibril ﷺ".

We have quoted all these views in detail because now the view of 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī alone has gained popularity, and because of his exalted stature it is regarded as free from all doubts and suspicions. It is for this reason that the transparent and doubtless view of Ibn-ul-Jazari is either not known to people or it is regarded as a weak argument, while our earlier discussion has made it clear that scholars like Imām Mālik, 'Allāmah Ibn Qutaybah

171: Al-Kautharī: Maqālāt ul Kautharī, pp20,21 Cairo 1372 AH.

'Allāmah Abul Faḍl Rāzi, Qaḍi Abu Bakr Ibn Ṭayyib, 'Imām Abul Ḥasan Ash'ari, Qaḍi Ayyād, 'Allāmah Ibn Ḥazm, 'Allāmah Abul Walīd Bajī, Imām Ghazzāli and Mullah 'Alī Qārī are all agreed that the seven letters are preserved and exist even today. None of the versions remaining at the time of the Final Review ('Ardatul Ākhirah)' of the Prophet ﷺ has been abrogated or given up. In fact Ibnul Jazari has stated that his view had obtained a consensus of the majority of scholars even before him. Scholars of the latest era, namely Shāh Waliullāh, Anwar Shāh Kashmirī and 'Allāmah Zāhid Kauthari hold the same view. Also, the popular scholars of Egypt, 'Allāmah Muḥammad Najīt Muṭy'ī 'Allāmah Khudrī Damyāṭi and Shaikh 'Abdul 'Aẓīm Zarqānī also adopted the same view. Hence, arguments apart, simply by virtue of the personalities this view becomes the most forceful one.[172]

## ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THIS VIEW

We present the reasoning behind this view. Some of the arguments have already been mentioned while some more are presented below.

1: The Qurānic verse

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ○

Surely We have revealed the Admonition (the Qurān) and surely We are its Guardian. (Al-Ḥijr, 15:9)

"We Alone would safeguard" clearly denotes that the verses of the Qurān are not abrogated by Allah Himself and would exist till the Day of Resurrection. Several traditions have already been quoted that signify the Seven Dialects of the Qurān were Divine Revelations. Hence, the verse implies that the Seven Dialects shall

172: Manāhil ul-'Irfān v1, p151.

remain preserved till the Day of Ressurrection.

2: If Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ had compiled the Qurān on one letter after abolishing six letters there must have been some mention of it in the vast treasure of *Aḥādith*. But it is not so. On the contrary, there are clear indications that all Seven Dialects were included in scripture prepared by him, further that he had got this scripture prepared in accordance with the parchments collected by Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ and the two were matched together after it was written. Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ has stated....

"I compared the scripture with these parts and there was no difference in them." Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr also concedes that the seven Dialects were extant in the times of Abu Bakr ﷺ so his copies should have had these included in them. So, if Uthman ﷺ had removed them Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ could not have said as he did,

فعرضت المصحف عليها فلم يختلفا فى شىء ـ

"There was no difference in them."[173]

3: 'Allāmah Ibnul Anbarī has quoted the famous Tabai'i (successor) 'Ubaydah Salmāni in Kitab-ul-Masāhif as under

قرأتنا التى جمع الناس عثمانؓ عليها هى العرضة الاخرىٰ ـ

Our recital on which Uthman ﷺ collected the people was that of 'Last Revision' of the Qurān by the Prophet ﷺ.[174]

This statement of 'Ubaydah رحمة الله عليه clearly indicates

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173 Mushkil ul Āthār v4, p193.

174 Kanzul 'Ummāl, Hadith No 4840 v1, Dairatul Ma'ārif, Daccan 1312 AH. The same tradition has been reported by Ibn Hajar in Musnad Ahmad, Abu Dawod and Ṭabari Fataḥ al Bārī v9, p36.

that Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ had not omitted any of those letters that existed at the time of Last Revision (of the Prophet ﷺ with Jibril ﷺ).

Some people have inferred from this that the Last Revision was done on one letter (of Quraysh) only and Uthmān ﷺ had a consensus on this same letter. But this is extremely unlikely that letters that were not abrogated would have remained excluded from this Revision.

4: Muhammad bin Sirīn رحمة الله عليه is also a famous Tābai'ī (successor). 'Allāmah Ibn Sa'd رحمة الله عليه has quoted him as under:

"كان جبرئيل يعرض القران على النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم كل عام مرة في رمضان فلما كان العام العام الذى توفى فيه عرضه عليه مرتين، قال محمد، فأنا ارجوان تكون قراءتنا العرضة الاخيرة"۔

"Jib'rīl ﷺ used to present (for revision) the Qurān before the Holy Prophet ﷺ once every year in the month of Ramadān. In the year in which the Prophet ﷺ died, Jibril ﷺ presented it (for revision) twice. Thus, I hope that our present recital is in accordance with this Last Revision.[175]

5: Sayyidina 'Amir Sha'bī رحمة الله عليه is also a famous Tabai'i and he had taken lessons from seven hundred Companions. Ibn ul Jazari رحمة الله عليه has quoted similar statement from him also.

These three personalities were the successors of the Companions and had lived just after the era of Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ. Therefore their opinion on this subject has the seal of authority.

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175: Ibn Sa'd: at-Tabqāt ul Kubrā, v2, p195 Part 6 Dārasādar Beirut 1376 AH.

6: In the vast collection of *Ahadith* we could not find a single example that could prove that there were two kinds of differences in the recital of the Qurān, one pertaining to Seven Dialects and the other to Recitals. On the contrary, we learn from many narrations that the two were one and the same thing, because the terms "Difference in Recitals" and "Difference in Letters or Dialects" have been used for one and the same difference. For example, Ubayy bin Ka'ab has stated as under:

كنت بالمسجد فدخل رجل يصلى فقرأ قراءة انكرتها عليه ودخل اخر فقرأ قراءة سوى قراءة صاحبه فلما قضينا الصلوٰة دخلنا جميعًا على رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم فقلت ان هذا قرأ قراءة انكرتها عليه و دخل اخر فقرأ قراءة سوىٰ قراءة صاحبه فامرهما رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم فقرا فحسّن النبى صلى اللّٰه على هو سلم شأنهما فسقط فى نفسى من التكذيب ولا اذكنت فى الجاهلية فلما رأى رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم ما قد غشينى ضرب فى صدرى ففضت عرقا و كأنما انظر الى الله فرقا فقال لى يا ابىّ ان ربى عزوجل ارسل اليّ ان اقرأالقران الٰى حرف فرددت اليه ان هون علٰى امتى فردالى الثانية اقرأه على حرفين فرددت اليه ان هوّن على امّتي فرد اليّ الثالثة اقرأه علٰى سبعة احرف۔

"I was in the mosque when a man entered and started offering *Salah*. He recited the Qurān in a way that appeared unfamiliar to me. Then another man came and he made a recital that was different from that of the first

man. So when we finished our *Salah* we all went to the Prophet ﷺ. I said to him, "This man made a recital that was unfamiliar to me, then another man came and he read a recital different from the first one." He asked both of them to recite. When they recited, the Prophet ﷺ commended both of them. On this my heart was filled with such doubts about him as had not entered my mind even in my pre-Islamic days. When the Prophet sensed my feelings he struck at my chest due to which I sweated heavily and in a state of fear I felt as if I was seeing Allah before me. Then he said, "O Ubayy, my Lord had sent me the message to recite the Qurān on one Letter. In response to this I requested for facility for my *Ummah* and He sent me message to recite it on two Letters. Again I requested for further facility for my *Ummah* then He sent me the third message that I should read it on Seven Letters."[176]

According to this narrative Ubayy bin Ka'ab ﷺ repeatedly referred to the difference in reading of the two persons as difference in recital, and this is what the Prophet ﷺ has called the variation of Seven Letters. It becomes obvious that in the Prophetic era the difference in recital and difference of letters was regarded as one and the same thing. There is no proof against this, supporting the idea of these two things being separate entities. And this proves that both are one and the same thing. So, when the preservation of recitals is proved through consensus and continuity, it follows automatically that the Seven Letters (or, Dialects), too, are preserved even to this day.

In the light of above arguments it becomes quite clear that whatever was left of the Seven Letters at the time of

176: Saḥiḥ Muslim v1p.273, Asah-ul-Mutāb'i; Delhi 1349 AH.

Last Revision had all been incorporated in the copy prepared by Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ and it is preserved and safeguarded till today. It has neither been abrogated nor was recital prohibited by anyone. However, it appears essential that for a complete clarification all such questions be answered as may be raised on this view.

## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

1: The first question that can be raised on this view is that if Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ has retained and preserved the Seven Letters what is his exclusive achievement that gave him the title "Compiler of the Qurān?"

The answer is that although innumerable Companions had learnt the Qurān by heart yet there existed only one standard copy of the Qurān that was collected by Sayyidina Abu Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ. This was not in the form a Book, but every *Surah* was written on separate parchments. Some Companions had, however kept their books individually. There was in them no unanimity of script or sequence of the *Surahs*, nor the Seven Letters were incorporated in them. Everyone had written and compiled it in version he had learnt from the Prophet ﷺ. Thus, one Book was written on one letter while the other was written on a different letter. As long as the Prophetic era was close and the link of Muslims with the centre (Madina) was firm and strong such differences did not create any notable problem because the Qurān actually rested in the memory of the Companions rather than on these books and parchments, and the majority of Companions knew that the Qurān was revealed on seven letters. But when Islam spread far and wide and new persons entered its fold,they learnt the Qurān on one letter each, and the fact that the Qurān was revealed on Seven Letters was not known to all of them. Hence differences arose among them. Everyone then thought his own recital to be authentic

and that of others as spurious. But since the individual copies were also different in Letters and scripts, with no provision to incorporate all the Seven Letters in them, there was no standard copy of the Qurān available to them to which they could refer to remove their differences.

In these circumstances Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ felt that if this state of affairs continued and standard copies of the Qurān were not provided all over the Islamic world, and personal copies not withdrawn, it would lead to great mischief. Hence he took the following steps:

i) He prepared seven standard copies of the Qurān and sent them to different areas.
ii) The script was such that all Seven Letters were incorporated in it. Hence words were without dots and diacritical marks and they could be read according to every Letter.
iii) All the personal copies which were possessed individually were burnt and buried.
iv) He imposed a restriction that, in future, all copies of the Qurān should be written in conformity with these seven originals.
v) The collection of Sayyidina Abū Bakr ﷺ was in the form of script comprising separate *Surahs*. Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ compiled them into one book.

Ṣayyidina Uthmān's ﷺ purpose in initiating these measures was to bring about a uniformity, throughout the world of Islam, in the script and in the sequence of the *Surahs* in the scriptures and to incorporate in them all the Seven Letters, leaving no room for anybody to reject a correct recital or insist on a wrong one, and making it possible for them to resolve their difference in recital through reference to the standard scriptures.

This is evident from a statement of Sayyidina Ali ﷺ that has been reported by Imām Abu Dāwood in his book

"Kitābul Maṣāḥif" with authentic precedents as under:

قال علیؓ لا تقولوا فی عثمانؓ الاّ خیرا فو اللّه ما فعل الذی فعل فی المصاحف الا عن ملاءٍ منا، قال، ما تقولونَ فی هذه القراءة فقد بلغنی ان بعضهم یقول ان قراءتی خیر من قرائتك، و هذا یكاد ان یكون كفرا، قلنا فما تریٰ؟ قال أریٰ ان نجمع الناس علیٰ مصحف واحد فلاتكون فرقة ولا اختلاف، قلنا فَنِعْمَ ما رأیت۔

Sayyidina Ali ﷺ said. "Say nothing about Uthmān ﷺ except what is good for him, because, by Allah! Whatever he did about the scriptures was done in our presence. He had consulted us and enquired our view about these recitals and said, I am receiving information that some people say to others that their recital was better than that of others, although this is an utterance very close to disbelief. On this we asked Uthmān ﷺ what is your opinion? He said, I propose that we unite all people on one scripture so that there remain no differences or anomalies. We all said, you have brought a very good proposal".[177]

This *Ḥadith* is manifestly clear about the undertaking of Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ. It clearly states that he wanted to compile a scripture the recital of which could be universally adopted and thereafter no room be left for calling a particular rendering to be wrong or rare or to be the only correct recital.[178]

Further, Ibn Ashtah رحمة الله عليه has quoted Sayyidina Anas ﷺ as under:

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177: Kitāb-ul-Maṣāḥif -Abu-Dāwood pp22, Raḥmania Press, Egypt 1355 AH and Fataḥ al-Bāri v9, p15

178: Al-Itqān v1, p61.

اختلفوا فى القران على عهد عثمان حتى اقتتل الغلمان والمعلمون فبلغ ذلك عثمان بن عفان فقال عندى تكذبون و تلحنون فيه فمن نأى عنى كان اشد تكذيبًا واكثر لحنا، يا اصحاب محمدﷺ اجتمعوا فاكتبوا للناس اماما۔

Differences arose about the Qurān in the time of Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ so much that young students quarreled with their teachers. When the news reached 'Uthmān ﷺ he said, you are disavowing (the correct recitals) and making mistakes although you are close to me. So, those who are living far away from me must be doing so in a greater measure. So. O Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ come together and prepare a Scripture for the people that may be followed. "This clearly indicates that the purpose of Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ behind it was not to abolish any Letter of the Qurān. Rather, he was grieved that some people denied the existence of correct Letters, and some people insisted on wrong method of recital. Hence, he wanted to compile a standard copy of the Qurān for the entire Islamic world."[179]

## MEANING OF WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE OF QURAYSH

2: The second question that arises is that Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ instructed the committee under Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ to compile the Qurān that:

اذا اختلفتم انتم وزيد بن ثابتؓ فى شىء من القران فاكتبوه بلسان

179: Many 'Ulamā have described the work of Sayyidina Uthmān in this manner. See al-Faṣl fil Malal wal Ahwaï, wan-Nihal. Ibn Ḥazm v7, p77, and Al-Bayān fil 'Ulūm il Qurān, Mawlana 'Abdul Ḥaq Ḥaqqānī chapter 2, p 62 Na'īmiya Press, Deoband. Manā hil al 'Irfān Zarqānī v1, p48-256.

قریش فانما نزل بلسانهم۔

If there be a difference among you and Zayd bin Thābit about any part of the Qurān then write it in the language of Quraysh because the Qurān has been revealed in their language."[180]

If he had retained all the Seven Letters why had he given such instructions?

The answer to this question is that in fact this is the very sentence which led Ibn Jarīr and some other scholars to think that Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ abolished six Letters and retained only the letter of Quraysh in the Qurān. But a careful examination of this instruction would reveal that a wrong inference has been drawn by these people. If we consider this instruction alongwith other traditions in this context, it becomes obvious that he only meant that in the event of any difference arising during transcription of the Qurān the script of Quraysh should be adopted. This is proved from the fact that during the transcription of the entire Qurān only one difference arose which has been described by Imām Zahrī as under:

فاختلفوا یومئذ فی التابوت والتابوه فقال النفرالقرشیون التابوت وقال زید بن ثابتؓ التابوه فرفع اختلافهم الی عثمانؓ فقال اکتبوه التابوت فانه بلسان قریش نزل۔

"So, there arose a difference on the writing of تابوه or تابوت. The Quraysh said it is تابوت but Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ said it should be تابوة. The difference was brought to the notice of Uthmān ﷺ who said, "Write it as التابوت because the Qurān has been revealed in the language of Quraysh.[181]

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180: Bukhari: Fath-ul-Bārī v9, p16.

181: Fatḥ-ul-Bārī v9, p16. Kanz ul 'Ummāl, v1, p282, *Ḥadith* 4783 on the reference of Ibn Sa'd and others and reference, Tirmizī.

It is obvious that the difference between Zayd and Quraysh Companions, as mentioned by Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ, pertained to script and not to language.

## USE OF SYNONYMS IN RECITATION

3: The third question that can be raised is that the explanation for differences of Seven Letters given by Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ apparently denotes that these Seven Letters could not be incorporated in the Book prepared by Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ because he says:

ان جبريل قال يا محمد اقرأ القران علٰى حرف، قال ميكائيل استزده حتى بلغ سبعة احرف، قال كل شافٍ كافٍ مالم تخلط اية عذاب برحمة أورحمة بعذاب نحو قولك تَعَالِ واَقْبِلْ و هَلُمُّ و اِذْهَبْ واَسْرِعْ وَعَجِّلْ۔

Jibrīl ﷺ said, "O Muḥammad, Read the Qurān on one Letter." Mika'īl said to the Prophet to ask for addition to it, until they reached Seven Letters and Jibrīl ﷺ said each one of them would be sufficient unless you change the verse of mercy with that of torment or vice versa. It will be as if you substitute the meaning of تعال (come) with words like,.... اقبل، هلم، اذهب، اسرع and عجل.[182]

It is evident from this *Hadith* that the difference of Seven Letters was in fact the difference of synonyms, that is, one word is used in one rendering while in the other a synonym is used although the recitals incorporated in the collection of Sayyidina Uthmān ﷺ have very few such difference. In these recitals the differences mostly pertain to sound, grammar, gender and dialects.

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182: These words are found in Musnad Aḥmad with a proper line of transmission. (Aujaz ul-Masālik v 2, p357)

The answer to this question is that in the definition of "Seven Letters" that we have adopted, seven variations of recitals have been described one of which is the use of synonyms. Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه has not given a full explanation of "Seven Letters" but has given only one example of it and only one kind of variation, that is the use of synonyms.

Such use of synonyms was very common in the early days of Islam because all Arabs were not fully conversant with the Quraysh dialect. Hence greater flexibility was allowed in the beginning that they could read the Quran with any of the synonyms they had heard from the Prophet ﷺ. Hence in the beginning quite frequently one recital had one word and another had its synonyms. When people became familiar with the Qurānic language this type of variation in recitals was gradually minimized. When the Prophet ﷺ revised the Qurān twice with Jibril عليه السلام, most of these synonyms were abrogated and thus the difference in synonyms was brought down to a bare minimum.

Sayyidina Uthmān رضي الله عنه did not incorporate such synonyms in his scripture as were abrogated in the "Last Revision" because their state had now become like the abrogated verses. However, the variations of recitals that were retained in the "Last Revision" were also retained by him. Thus the variation quoted by Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه in the above *Ḥadith* is just an example, most of which were abrogated in the "Last Revision" and hence could not be incorporated in the 'Uthmāni scripture, nor the present recitals include them.

The foregoing conclusions are summarised in three points:

1: Several recitals of the Qurān were abrogated during the "Last Revision" of the Qurān by the Prophet ﷺ with Jibril عليه السلام.

2: Sayyidina Uthman رضي الله عنه got his scripture compiled

according to this "Last Revision".

3: The variation of synonyms as described by Abu Bakr ﷺ is not present in the 'Uthmāni scripture. The third conclusion is obvious and arguments about the second have been given earlier, of which the most apt statement is the one of 'Ubaydah Salmāni رحمة الله عليه that the recital on which Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ united us was in accordance with the "Last Revision".[183]

Now remains the first conclusion that several recitals were abrogated at the time of "Last Revision". The argument for this is provided by the view of Research Scholar Ibnul Jazarī quoted below.

ولا شك ان القران نسخ منه و غيّر فيه فى العرضة الا خيرة فقد صح النص بذلك عن غير واحد من الصحابة وروينا باسناد صحيح عن زر ابن حبيشؓ قال قال لى ابن عباسؓ اى القراء تين تقرأ قلت الاخيرة قال فان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يعرض القران على جبرئيل عليه السلام فى كل عام مرة قال فعرض عليه القران فى العام الذى قبض فيه النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم مرتين فشهد عبد الله يعنى ابن مسعودؓ ما نسخ منه وما بدل۔[184]

And there is no doubt that a good deal in the Qurān was abrogated and altered at the time of "Last Revision", because it has been clarified by several Companions ﷺ. We have received the narration of Zirr ibn Hubaysh ﷺ with authentic sources that Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ asked him which recital he followed. He replied "The last recital". Ibn 'Abbas said, "The Prophet used to revise the Qurān

183: Kanzul 'Ummāl, Ḥadith #484, v1, p286.
184: An-Nashr fil-Qirāt-i.l 'Ashr v1, p32.

with Jibril ﷺ once every year, so in the year of his death he revised it twice. Whatever was abrogated or changed on this occasion, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was witness to that."[185]

It is obvious that on the occasion of "Last Revision" many of the recitals were abrogated by Allah Himself. The variations of synonyms described by Abu Bakr ﷺ must have been abrogated at that time because Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ has compiled the copies of the Qurān in accordance with the Last Revision and the variations of synonyms are only rarely found in them.

## ABDULLAH BIN MAS'ŪD AND HIS TRANSCRIPT

4: The fourth doubt that can be raised on the above mentioned view is that it is proved through several narrations that Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ was not happy with the compilation of the Qurān done by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ and he did not allow his own transcript to be burnt. So if Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ had not abolished six Letters where was the reason of the objection by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ?

The answer to this objection is that in fact 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ had two objections on the work done by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ. First, why was he not associated with task of transcription of the Qurān, and secondly, why the other transcripts were burnt?

Imām Zuhri has been quoted in a narration in Saḥiḥ Tirmizī that Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ had a grievance as to why he was not given task when he had a longer record of the Prophet's company than Zayd bin

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185: Hāfiz Ibn Hajar has also reproduced different versions on this subject (Fath ul Bārī v9, p36)

Thābit. Sayyidina 'Uthmān's plea in this connection was that the task was being done in Madinah while 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was in Kufah (Iraq) at that time and a delay was not desirable. Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ had also entrusted the responsibility to Zayd bin Thābit. For this reason also he thought it proper to let Zayd continue the task. (Fathul Bāri v9 p16)

The other objection of Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'sd ﷺ was that Sayyidina 'Uthmān had ordered to burn all other transcripts after those compiled by Zayd and his committee". He was not prepared to burn the one he had with him. Abu Mūsa Ash'arī ﷺ and Ḥuzayfah bin Yamān ﷺ met him to persuade him to burn that copy. But he said:

واللّٰہلا ادفعه اليهم، اقرأنى رسول اللّٰه صلى اللّٰه عليه وسلم بضعاو
سبعين سورة ثم ادفعه اليهم، واللّٰه لا ادفعه اليهم۔

"By Allah I would not hand over this transcript to them. The Prophet ﷺ taught me more than seventy *Surahs* directly. Should I still hand it over to them? By God I will not give it to them."[186]

Sayyidina Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ also advised others not to hand over those transcripts in their possession which they had copied from him. Sayyidina Khumayr bin Mālik has said.

"امر بالمصاحف ان تغيّر، قال قال ابن مسعودؓ من استطاع منكم
ان يغُلّ مصحفه فليغُلّه،...... ثم قال قرأت من فم رسول اللّٰه صلى
اللّٰه عليه و سلم سبعين سورة، أفاترك ما اخذت من فيّ رسول اللّٰه

186: Mustadrak Hākim v2, p228, Da'iratul Ma'ārif Dacan 1340 AH. Ḥākim has said that the *Hadith* is sound.

صلی اللہ علیہ و سلم و علی الہ و صحبہ و سلّم"۔

> When changes in other transcripts were ordered 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ؓ asked the people to hide their transcripts if they can do it.... Then he said,
>
> "I have learnt seventy *Surāhs* from the Prophet ﷺ. Should I then give up a thing that I have directly learnt from the holy lips of the Prophet?".[187]

From this it appears that the transcript of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ؓ was slightly different from that of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ and so he wanted to keep it safe. But what was different in it? We do not find any conclusive evidence in authentic narrations about it. Apparently it seems that they basically differed in the sequence of various *Surāhs*. It has been already mentioned that in the transcripts of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ؓ the *Surahs* were not arranged but every *Surah* was written separately. Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ, however, arranged the *Surahs* in particular sequence in his transcripts. Imām Ḥākim states.

ان جمع القران لم یکن مرة واحدة فقد جمع بعضہ بحضرة رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم ثم جمع بعضہ بحضرة ابی بکر الصدیق، والجمع الثالث ہو فی ترتیب السور، کان فی خلافة امیر المؤمنین عثمان بن عفان، رضی اللہ عنہم۔

> The compilation of the Qurān was not completed at one time. Some of it had been complied during the presence of the Prophet ﷺ, then some of it was compiled at the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq ؓ, and the third stage of its compilation was when its *Surahs* were

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187: Al-Fatḥur Rabbāni (Tabwīb. Masnad Aḥmad) v8, p35 Egypt, 1373 AH.

arranged. This task was done during the time of Sayyidina 'Uthmān bin 'Affān ﷺ, the thrid caliph.[188]

The transcript of Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ was quite different in the sequence of Surah's. For example, it had *Surah-an-Nisā* before *Surah Aal 'Imrān.*[189] Probably Ibn Mas'ud had learnt the Qurān from the Prophet ﷺ in the sequence adopted in his transcript, and he wished that this transcript should exist in that sequence. This is supported by a narration of 'Saḥiḥ Bukhāri' that a person from Iraq once came to Sayyidah 'Aishah رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنها:

قال يا ام المؤمنين اريني مصحفك، قالت لِمَ؟ قال لعلّي اؤلّف القران عليه، فانه يُقرأ غير مؤلف، قالت وما يضرك ايّه قرأت قبل۔

He said "Ummul Mu'minin! Show me your transcript." She asked, "Why? He said, 'So that I arrange my Qurānic transcript according to yours because in our land it is recited without any regard to its sequential order." She said, "Whichever part of the Qurān you read first will not do you any harm."[190]

Explaining this tradition Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar رحمة الله عليه has written that the Iraqi was following the recitals of Ibn Mas'ūd and since he had not changed or destroyed his transcript, the sequence of the *Surahs* was different from those of Sayyidina 'Uthmān's transcripts, and the latter sequence was better in order. That is why the Iraqi considered his transcript as disarranged in comparison to the transcriptions of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ.[191]

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188: Al-Mustadrak, Ḥākim, v2, p229.

189: 'Allāmah Suyūṭi has reporduced the entire sequence of Surahs of Ibn Mas'ūd with reference to Ibn Ashta. This sequence is very much different from the trascripts of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ.

190: Saḥiḥ Bukhāri: Chapter Tālīful Qurān.

191: Fatḥ ul-Bāri, v9, p32.

It appears from this tradition that the transcript of Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ was basically different in the sequence of *Surahs*. In addition, there may have been a difference in the script also, and possibly it was written in a script that did not incorporate all the recitals as against the transcripts of Sayyidina Uthman ﷺ.

Otherwise, if we go by what Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr says that 'Uthmān ﷺ had got the Qurān transcribed on one single Letter after abolishing six Letters, and the transcription of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was written in one of the six, the following objections can be raised:

i) In the above mentioned tradition of Saḥiḥ Bukhāri the Iraqi mentioned the difference of sequence only. If there was a difference of Letters as well, he should have mentioned them in view of greater importance attached to it.

ii) According to the view of Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr and others, the Seven Letters stand for Seven Dialects of different tribes. If that were true, there should have been no difference in the transcription of 'Abdullah bin -Mas'ūd ﷺ and that of 'Uthmān ﷺ because this view also holds that Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ had got them written on the Letter of Quraysh, and Sayyidina Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ was also a Qurayshi,

iii) The strongest argument offered by Ḥāfiz Bin Jarīr and his followers about the abrogation of six Letters is that there was a consensus of the Companions on this action. If Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ used to recite the Qurān on a different letter and validated its transcription as such, how can it be considered to be a consensus which must include a companion of his stature. Some scholars have claimed that Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ had later accepted the opinion held by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ, but there is no definite

evidence available to support this view. Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar has written,

"Ibn Abi Dāwood has included a chapter under the heading 'Agreement of Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ on the action of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ, but he could not produce any relevant tradition to support this claim."[192]

We do not get an answer to these objections in the statements of Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr رحمة الله عليه. Hence it is concluded that Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ had retained all the Seven Letters in his Transcripts and Sayyidina Ibn Mas'ūd's ﷺ objection did not show that the six Letters were abolished.[193] In fact nothing like that had happened and his objection pertained to why the transcripts other than those compiled by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ were being destroyed while they were also correct only because they differed in sequence of *Surahs* and script.

## CONCLUSIONS OF DISCUSSION

The discussion on "Seven Letters" has become rather lengthy. We many sum up the conclusions drawn so that they are easily digested.

a) For the convenience of his people the Prophet ﷺ begged from Allah that the recital of the Qurān may not be limited to one system, but permission be granted to recite it in different ways. Hence the Qurān was revealed on Seven Letters.

b) The correct meaning of revelation on Seven Letters is that Seven variations were allowed in recital. As a

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192: Fatḥul Bāri v9, p40.

193: There is only one narration in Musnad Ahmad from which it appears that Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ had abolished six Letters and Sayyidina Ibn Mas'ūd had objection to that (Al-Fatḥ-ur-Rabbānī v18, p369) but the narration is weak because an ignorant person has reported it.

result several recitals came to be used.

c) In the beginning, of the seven basic points of differences in recital, differences in words and use of synonyms was very common. It was quite frequent that a word used in one recital was replaced by its synonym in another recital. But gradually, as the people of Arabia became more and more acquainted with the Qurānic language such variations were reduced, and by the time of 'Last Revision' of the Qurān by the Prophet ﷺ with Jibril ؑ this type of differences had become negligible, and only the differences that concerned composition of tenses, genders, singular and plural, active and passive tenses and variations of accent had remained.

d) All the variations that remained at the time of the Last Revision, were incorporated by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ in his transcripts. Words were left free of dots and vowel marks to accommodate variation in recital. Hence most of the variations of recitals were merged in it, and those recitals that could not be merged into one transcript were shown in other transcripts. Thus, occasionally there occurred a difference of one or two words in the several transcripts of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ.

e) In this manner Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ got seven transcripts written, and also arranged the *Surahs* in a sequence while these *Surahs* were not arranged in the Transcripts of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ؓ. Further, he prescribed a script for the Qurān, and all those transcripts that were different from this sequence and script were burnt.

f) Sayyidina Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ؓ retained his transcript whose sequence was different from the 'Uthmānic Transcripts. He wanted to preserve this

sequence, hence he did not hand over his Transcript to Sayyidina 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه to be burnt.

## TRUTH ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE IN OPINION ON SEVEN LETTERS

**A misunderstanding removed:**

In the end, it seems essential to remove another basic misunderstanding that a cursory reader of the foregoing discussion may get into. He may fall into doubt as to how such big differences of opinion occurred in a Fundamental Book like the Qurān which, under the Divine Protection, has remained preserved in the original form without the slightest change in it.

A thoughtful study of the views that we have mentioned in the discussion of "Seven Letters" easily provides the answer to this doubt. Anybody who concentrates on the basic reality of this difference of opinion would easily know that it is entirely theoretical in nature, and from the practical standpoint this difference has not the slightest effect on the Truth and Reality and absolute preservation of Qurān. It is agreed by everyone without exception that the Qurān is being read continuously without any break in the same form in which it exists today. There has not occurred even an iota of change in it. It is also agreed by all the scholars that all the recitals that have reached us in a continuous chain of narrations are correct and the Qurān can be read according to any one of them. There is also a consensus of the entire *Ummah* that rare recitals described by some do not form part of the Qurān. This is also an agreed fact that the recitals that were abrogated before or during the 'Last Revision' do not remain part of the Qurān on the instruction of the Prophet ﷺ himself. This is also an undisputed and undoubted fact that the difference in the "Seven Letters" of the Qurān was only literal in nature,

meaningwise all these letters were the same. Thus, if someone has read the Qurān only one recital (Letter) he would learn the subject of the Qurān and he would not be in need of another recital to acquire due guidance from the Qurān. There is also no difference of opinion, not even the slightest, that the Transcripts of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ were prepared with utmost care with full endorsement and affirmation of hundreds of Companions and the entire Muslim world and the Qurān was transcribed in them exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and not a single soul objected to it.[194]

Hence, the difference that has been discussed in the preceding pages pertained only to the questions, "What was meant by 'Seven Letters' in the *Ḥadith*? Do the continuous recitals prevalent today comprise "Seven Letters" or only one Letter?" This is purely a theoretical difference. Hence it is wrong to assume, God forbid, that the Qurān has become a disputed entity on account of these differences. This can be understood from the following example.

Suppose the entire world agrees about a certain book that it was written by such and such author. The attribution of this book to that author is authentic and he himself confirmed that by publishing it that the book was written by him and this could be published ever afterwards in accordance with that transcription. But later on the people differ on the point whether the author had made any literal change in the script before its publication or published it in its original form. Obviously, this theoretical difference does not make the transparent reality a point of dispute about which every

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194: Although Sayyidina Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ insisted on retaining his transcript yet he did not object to the transcript of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ in the least.

one is agreed that the book was published by the same author at his own responsibility and he has attributed it to himself and allowed it to be published with this attribution ever afterwards. Likewise, when the entire Muslim *Ummah* is united in the opinion that the Qurān was transcribed by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ exactly as it was revealed and all its continuous recitals are correct and revealed as such, then these facts cannot become a matter to be disputed due to the theoretical differences that have been discussed during the explanation of "Seven Letters".

**CHAPTER 4**

# ABROGATOR & ABROGATED

## MEANING OF ABROGATION

Another important subject of Sciences of the Qurān is the discussion on "Abrogator ناسخ" and Abrogated منسوخ. This is a very lengthy and multidimensional discussion. But instead of going into all its details only the basic points are being presented here.

Abrogation is translated from the Arabic word *Naskh* نسخ which literally means "To erase, to compensate", and its technical definition is:

رفع الحكم الشرعي بدليل شرعي

To repeal a legal order through legal argument.

That is to say that sometimes Allah enforces a legal order relevant to a particular time. Then at a later time, in His Infinite Wisdom, He cancels this order and enforces a new one in its place. This action is known as "Abrogation نسخ" and thus the old cancelled order is known as "Abrogated" منسوخ and the newly replaced order as "Abrogator" ناسخ .

## PRUDENT AND CONVENTIONAL PROOF OF ABROGATION

The Jews think that there can be no Abrogation in the Commands of Allah, because if they accept Abrogation it would imply that Allah also changes His views (God forbid). They state that this would mean that once Allah

thought one Commandment as proper but later on (God forbid) He realised His mistake and withdrew it which is commonly known as بداء (Budā).

But the objection raised by the Jews is quite superficial and if we ponder a little we can see the mistake. "Abrogation" does not mean a change in views, but it implies issuing orders according to the needs of another time. It is not for the Abrogator to declare the Abrogated as wrong but it is to fix the time limit for the enforcement of the first order and to tell that the first order was just and proper for the time it remained in force. But now a new order is being enforced according to the changed circumstances. Whoever would think over it in a reasonable frame of mind would have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that this change is exactly in keeping with the infinite wisdom of Allah. It cannot be questioned in any way. He would not be a doctor in the true sense if he uses the same prescription under all the circumstances and for every disease. An adept would make necessary changes in his prescriptions according to the changing condition of the patient.

This rule applies not only to religious injunctions but the entire universe works on this principle. Through His expedience Allah makes changes in the weather conditions. We get winter, summer, spring, autumn, rainy season or drought. All these changes are exactly in conformity with the expedient measure of Allah. He must be a witless person, indeed, who terms it *Budā* and contends that and argues it amounts to mutation in the Judgement of Allah. He says that He once preferred winter then discovered His mistake and replaced it with summer. That exactly is the case with the abrogation of religious injunctions and considering it a fault by calling it *Budā* would be an extreme degree of short sightedness and ignorance of facts.

"Abrogation" is not a trait specific only to the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ but it has remained a regular feature in the religious orders of other Prophets عليهم السلام as well. We find several examples in the present day Bible. For example it has occurred in the Bible that "In the religious system of Sayyidina Ya'qub ﷺ a man could have two real sisters as his wives at the same time, and he himself had two wives at one time, Liyyah and Rahil who were real sisters.[195] But this was forbidden in the religious dispensation of Sayyidina Musa ﷺ.[196] Every moving animal was permissible as food in the dispenstion of Sayyidina Nuh ﷺ[197] but many of them were prohibited in that of Sayyidina Musa ﷺ.[198] Also, divorce was permissible freely in the dispensation of Sayyidina Musa ﷺ but in that of Sayyidina Isa ﷺ divorce was allowed only[199] if a woman committed adultery. In short there are several such examples in the New and Old Testaments of the Bible wherein an existing order had been abrogated through a new order.[200]

## DIFFERENCE SEEN IN THE TECHNICAL MEANING OF ABROGATION BY THE EARLIER AND LATER SCHOLARS

There has been a difference in the meaning of abrogation as understood by the earlier scholars and the later scholars. We must look at that first. In the phraseology of earlier scholars the word 'Abrogation' had a very wide scope of application, and it included many such possibilities that were not regarded as Abrogation by the later scholars. For example, if the general scope of a verse

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195: Bible, Book of Genesis 29:23to30.
196: Ahbar 18:18.
197: Genesis 9:3.
198: Ahbar 11:7 14:7.
199: Istithna' 24: 1,2.
200: Bible Mutta19:15.

was limited by another they regarded the first as abrogated. Hence if common words are used in one verse and they have been specified in a particular manner in another verse, the earlier scholars used to term the former as 'Abrogated' and the latter as "Abrogator". This did not mean that the first commandment has been totally abolished but that the generalisation created by the first verse has been removed by the second verse, for example, the Qurān says.

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَّ

And marry not the mushrikāt until they believe.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:221)

Here the phrase *mushrikāt* polytheist women is general which apparently means that marriage is disallowed with all kinds of polytheist women be they idolatress or of the people of Book. But in another verse it says.

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

and (lawful to you is to marry) the chaste from among those who were given the Book... (Al-Ma'idah, 5:5)

This indicates that in the first verse "polytheist women" meant those polytheists that were not from the people of the Book. Thus the second verse has limited the universal character of the first verse, and it tells us that this phrase refers to the particular type of polytheist women. The earlier scholars regard this also an abrogation and the first verse as abrogated and the second as abrogator.

Contrary to this, the scope of Abrogation with the later scholars is not so wide. They consider only such state as "Abrogated" in which the previous order is totally abolished. They do not consider limitation of a universal command as abrogation. Thus, in the above example there

has been no abrogation according to later scholars, because the real order of prohibition of marrying a polytheist woman exists as such. The second verse has clarified only that the meaning of the first verse were not so generalised as to include the women of the people of Book, but was limited and specific to women other than women of the people of Book.

Because of this difference in the scope of application the number of abrogated verses, according to earlier scholars, was very large, and they used to term one verse as abrogated and the other as abrogator due to minor differences in them. But according to later scholars the number of aborgated verses is very limited.[201]

## DISCUSSION ON *ABROGATION IN THE QURĀN*

Abrogation of religious injunctions is not new but was also done in earlier times of the previous *Ummahs*, and this fact is undisputed by all.

Several such orders have been abrogated for the people of Muḥammad ﷺ too. For example, the injunction was to face towards *Baytal Maqdis* during *Salāh*, but later on this was abrogated and Muslims were ordained to face towards *Ka'bah*. There is no dispute about it among the Muslims.[202]

But there is a difference of opinion about whether there had been any abrogation in the Qurān. In other words, it is disputed if there is yet any verse in the Qurān that is recited although its command is abrogated. The majority of traditionalists believe that the Qurān does contain such verses whose injunctions are abrogated. But of the

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201: Al-Itqān v2, p22.

202: Tafsīr Qasmi v1, p32. Jamaluddin al-Qasim. 'Eisa al-bābi al-Ḥalbī Egypt 1376 AH.

*M'utazilah*, Abu Muslim Iṣfahāni maintains that no verse of the Qurān has been abrogated but all the verses of the Qurān continue to be obligatory.

Some other scholars have also expressed the same opinion. A number of modernists of our time also hold the same view. Hence, the verses in which abrogation is obvious, they explain them in a manner that abrogation may not have to be accepted. But, the fact is that this viewpoint is very weak and to adopt it one would have to draw far fetched meanings while explaining the relative verses. These would not conform to the principles of exegesis.

In fact, those who do not believe in abrogation in the Qurān suppose that abrogation is a defect of which the Qurān should be free. But as already stated, it is an extremely short sighted view to consider abrogation as wrong. It is surprising that, unlike the Jews and Christians, Abu Muslim Isfahāni and his followers do not deny that there had been abrogation in many of the Commandments of Allah, but only say that there is no abrogation in the Qurān. Now, if abrogation is a vice, why did it occur in the non-Qurānic injunctions as they are also from Allah? And if something was not a vice for non-Qurānic injunctions how could it be so for Qurānic injunctions. It is argued that it appears against the Divine Expediency that a verse of the Qurān should remain only as a sacred relic for recital yet not to be practised.[203]

We fail to understand on what grounds this has been considered against the Divine Expediency, while there could be several expedient reasons in retaining the verses whose commands are abrogated. For example, we come to know of the prudence behind gradual imposition of religious doctrines, and also of the prudential manner

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203: Qurān-e-Muḥkam, by Mawlana 'Abdus Samad Raḥmānī, p120 Majils Ma'ariful Qurān . Deoband 1386 AH.

adopted to bind human beings to follow His doctrine. Further, it also serves as history of these doctrines and their backgrounds. Allah has Himself revealed in the Qurān at several places the doctrines and Commandments of the previous nations that were abrogated for the people of Muḥammad ﷺ. For example,

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفُرٍ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ
حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوِ
الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ

> And those who became Jews, We forbade them every animal with claws, and of oxen and sheep we forbade them the fat thereof except such as their backs carry or the entrails or what is mixed with the bones.
>
> (Al-An'ām: 6:146)

Obviously Allah has described an abrogated order an admonishment for the Muslims. Thus, if some abrogated Qurānic verses are retained for this purpose what is there in it against the Divine Expediency? Moreover, can anyone claim that he knows the wisdom behind all actions of Allah, or that he understands the expediency behind every Qurānic verse and its revelation? If such a claim is not true, and it certainly is not true, how can one deny an order of Allah simply because one does not know the expediency behind it while its enforcement has been justified on religious principles.

Thus the fact is that those who do not believe in abrogation in the Qurān have based their opinion on a misconceived idea. They have given far-fatched meanings to some Qurānic verses because they think that abrogation is a fault and they want to see and Qurān is free of it. If it becomes clear to them that it is not a fault but conforms to

the Will of Allah, they would also give the same meanings to such verses as are obvious and commonly adopted.

The Qurān says:

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ اٰيَةٍ اَوْ نُنْسِهَا نَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا اَوْ مِثْلِهَا اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ○

> Whichever revelation We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or similar to it. Know you not that Allah has power over everything?
> (Al-Baqarah, 2:106)

Whoever studies this verse with an unbiased mind shall deduce that abrogation had continued according to clear injunctions of the Qurān itself. But Abu Muslim Iṣfahāni and his associates who willingly or unwillingly consider abrogation a fault, interpret this verse in a far-fetched manner. They say that this verse deals only with a hypothetical situation. They argue that it implies, "If we were to abrogate a verse, we would reveal a like or a better verse" and it does not follow that any verse would actually be abrogated. In proof of this they present another verse

اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ ○

> If the Compassionate had a son, I would be the first of worshippers. (Az-Zukhruf, 43:81)

Those who reject possibility of abrogation say that just as this verse speaks of a hypothetical situation which does not mean that Allah really has a son, so too the former verse (of *Surah Al-Baqarah*) raises a hypothetical situation not necessitating abrogation of a verse.[204]

But this interpretation is not correct because if there were to be no abrogation Allah would not have mentioned

204: Qurān Muḥkam, Mawlana Abduṣ Ṣamad Raḥmānī p21. Majlis Ma'ariful Qurān, Deoband.

it even as a hypothetical possibility. The Qurān does not place a command over anything that may never happen. As for this verse about a son, there is a world of a difference between it and the verse of abrogation.

Hence any reader of this verse would know that this is merely a hypothetical proposition, which means that if at all Allah would bear a son I would have worshipped him before anybody else but since this is an impossible thing to happen, the question of worshipping anybody other than Allah does not arise. Contrary to this the occurrence of "Abrogation" is not logically impossible even according to Abū Muslim Iṣfahāni himself, hence calling it a hypothetical situation is a meaningless proposition.

This becomes all the more apparent from looking at the background of revelation of the verse of abrogation. Some unbelievers had commented that the Prophet ﷺ first orders his followers to follow one thing and later on instructs them against it and introduces a new order in place of it. This verse was revealed in answer to their comments. It is clear now that the revelation of this verse describes the purpose of abrogation rather than negate its occurrence.[205]

## NUMBER OF ABROGATED VERSES OF THE QURĀN

As already mentioned, the scope of Abrogation was very wide in its interpretation by earlier scholars, and hence they have mentioned a large number of abrogated verses. But' 'Allāmah Jalāluddin Suyūṭī has written that there are only nineteen abrogated verses in the whole of Qurān according to the definition of the later day scholars.[206]

Then, the latest of the scholars Shāh Wali-Ullah, made a detailed analysis of all the nineteen verses and accepted only five of them to be the abrogated ones. As for the rest

205: Ruḥ ul-Ma'ānī, by 'Allāmah Ālūsī v1, p351.
206: Al-Itqān by Allāmah Suyūṭī v2, p22.

of them, he has preferred the commentaries according to which these verses need not be considered as Abrogated. The arguments given by Shāh Waliullah about many of these verses are most appropriate and acceptable but some of them may be disputed. However, the five verses that he considers to be abrogated are as follows:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِيْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ○

It is prescribed for you, when death approaches anyone of you and if he leaves behind some wealth, to make a bequest to parents and near kindreds in an equitable way, it is an obligation on the God fearing.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:180)

This verse was revealed when Laws of Inheritance were not revealed and according to it every person was bound to make will before he died about the distribution of his assets among his parents and other relatives. Thereafter the revelation of the verse of Inheritance:

يُوْصِيْكُمُ اللّٰهُ فِيْ أَوْلَادِكُمْ ......... الخ

Allah enjoins you concerning your children .....

(Al-Baqarah, 2:11)

— abrogated this verse, and Allah Himself fixed a schedule of the distribution of inherited assets, and it is no more obligatory on anyone to make a will before his death.

In Surah Al-Anfāl it is stated...

إِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ عِشْرُوْنَ صَابِرُوْنَ يَغْلِبُوْا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَّكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَّغْلِبُوْا أَلْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ○

> If there be of you twenty persevering they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be of you a hundred, they will overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand. (Al-Anf'āl, 8:65)

This verse although it is a piece of information but essentially it is a command that it is not allowed to Muslims to show their backs while in combat with an enemy ten times their number. This was later on abrogated through the following verse:

اَلْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللّٰهُ عَنكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِن يَكُن مِّنكُم مِّائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِن يَكُن مِّنكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

> (O believers) Now Allah has lightened it for you, for He knew that there is weakness in you. So if there be of you a hundred persevering they will overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand by Allah's leave. And Allah is with the persevering. (Al-Anf'āl, 8:66)

This verse has lightened the burden imposed by the first command and the limit of tenfold enemies has been reduced to twofold. Thus a retreat up to double the strength of enemy is not permissible now.

The third verse considered abrogated by Shāh Waliullah is the following verse of *Surah Al-Aḥzāb*:

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَاءُ مِن بَعْدُ وَلَا أَن تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ ......o

> (Besides these), it is not lawful for you to take (more)

> wives after this nor that you should exchange them for other wives even though their beauty may please you......... (Al-Ahzāb, 33:52)

According to this verse it was not lawful for the Prophet ﷺ to marry any more women.

Later, this was abrogated through a verse that occurs before it in the present sequence of Qurānic *surāhs* and verses. It is:

يَاأَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَكَ اللَّاتِي آتَيْتَ أُجُورَهُنَّ۔۔۔ ○

> O Prophet! We have made lawful for you your wives whom you have given their dower........ (Al-Ahzāb, 33:50)

Shāh Waliullah and others say that the earlier restriction was abrogated through this verse, but in fact abrogation in this verse is not definite. Its explanation as given by Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr is to a great extent straightforward and simple. He has said that the two verses were revealed in their present order; in verse fifteen O Prophet, we.... Allah has named some particular categories of women as being lawful for the Prophet ﷺ and then in verse 51, (Besides these), it is not lawful..... it has been specified that women belonging to catgories other than these were not lawful for him.[207]

4: The fourth verse that is abrogated according to Shah Walliullah is:

يَاأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ○

207: Tafsīr Ibn jarīr.

O you who believe, when you counsel in private with the Messenger give alms before your counseling. That is better for you and purer. But if you cannot find (the means), then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(Al-Mujādilah, 58:12)

This verse was abrogated by the next verse:

أَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَنْ تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ...... ○

Do you fear to give alms before your counseling? So when you did it not, and Allah has relented towards you, then establish the *Ṣalāh* and pay the *Zakah* and obey Allah and His Messenger...... (Al-Mujādilah, 58:13)

In this way the Command to give alms before counseling stands abrogated.

5: The fifth verse is the following verse of *Surah al-Muzzammil*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ○ قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ○ نِصْفَهُ أَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ○

O you (Muhammad) enfolded in your robes, keep vigil by night, except a little, half of it, or diminish a little.

(Al-Muzzammil, 73:1-3)

This verse had ordained for worship for at least half of the night, but later on this was abrogated by a flexibility provided in the verses that follow it.

عَلِمَ أَنْ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ۚ

> And He knows that (all of) you cannot keep it up (like that), so He has relented towards you; so recite so much of the Qurān as may be easy (for you).
>
> (Al-Muzzammil, 73:20)

Shāh Waliullah has stated that although *Tahajjud* (late night *Salah*) was not obligatory even before, but there was a greater emphasis on it and its duration was also longer, yet later both, the emphasis on it and the binding about timing, were relaxed.

These are the five verses in which abrogation had occurred. But it must be understood that these five examples are only those wherein the abrogator and abrogated verses can both be found in the Qurān. There are many such examples where abrogator verses are not, such as those related to change of *Qiblah* etc.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion was aimed at clarifying that, God forbid, "Abrogation" in the Qurānic verses is not a defect for which efforts should be made to show Qurān free from it. Rather it is exactly in keeping with the Divine Scheme of things. Hence the meanings of any verse should not be rejected simply because that affirms "Abrogation" in the Qurān. Nothing stands in the way of adopting the meanings or explanations of a verse if they conform to principles of 'Exegesis' even if that would mean classifying the verse as abrogated.

CHAPTER: 5

# HISTORY OF PRESERVATION OF THE QURĀN

After having dealt with the history of revelation of the Qurān and gone through its relevant discussions, we now present the history of preservation of the Qurān. We will see how the Qurān was preserved at the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the times that followed, how it was written, and through how many stages these attempts passed. Also, we will discuss and answer the doubts being created by non-Muslim and atheists.

## WRITING OF THE QURĀN DURING THE DAYS OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

Since the Qurān was not revealed all at one time but its various verses were revealed in piecemeal according to the needs and circumstances of the time it was not possible to preserve it as a written Book during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. Also, Allah had granted a distinction to the Qurān against other Divine Scriptures. Its preservation was done more through memory than pen and paper. According to Saḥīḥ Muslim, Allah assured the Prophet ﷺ:

ومنزل عليك كتاباً لا يغسله الماء

I am going to reveal to you a Book which water cannot wash.

Meaning thereby that other books in the world will perish

due to worldly calamities, as happened in the case of Torah, Injeel and other Divine Scriptures but the Qurān will be so preserved in the hearts (memory) of men that there will be no danger of its getting perished.[208] Hence, greater emphasis was placed on memory for the preservation of the Qurān in the early days of Islam. In the beginning, when revelations came to the Prophet ﷺ he used to repeat its words at the same time so as to memorise them well. On this, the following verse was revealed:

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ○ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ○

(O Prophet) Move not your tongue therewith to make haste with it (the learning of the Qurān), Surely upon Us rests the collecting thereof, and the reciting thereof.

(Al-Qiyāmah, 75:16-17)

This verse assured the Prophet ﷺ that he need not repeat the words hurriedly right at the moment of revelation itself because Allah Himself would confer upon him a memory that he would not forget a revelation after having heard it once. And that is how it happened. The verses were committed to the Prophet's memory as soon as they were revealed. Thus the Prophet's heart itself was the safest repository of the Qurān wherein there was not the slightest chance of any mistake or alteration. Moreover, as an additional precaution he used to repeat the Qurān before Jibril ﷺ in the month of Ramaḍan every year, and on the year of his death he did it twice.[209]

Further, he did not teach the Companions only the meanings of the Qurān but had them memorise its words as well. The Companions were themselves so keen to learn and memorise the Qurān that everyone of them

208: An-Nashr fil Qir'at il, 'Ashr: Ibn ul Jazarī v1, p6.
209: Saḥīḥ Bukhāri with Fat-ḥul Bāri v9, p36.

wanted to excel the other. There were women who demanded nothing else as *mahr* (dower) from their husbands except that they should teach them the Qurān. Hundreds of Companions, ridding themselves of all worldly cares, had devoted their entire lives for this purpose. Not only did they memorise it but also revised it in their nightly *Salah*. Sayyidina 'Ubadah bin Ṣāmit ﷺ has stated that whenever some one migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ entrusted him to the care of one of the Ansars so that he could teach the Qurān to the newcomer. So much noise was created in Masjid Nabawī by the voices of the learners and teachers of the Qurān that the Prophet ﷺ had to tell them to lower their voices so that there was no confusion.[210]

Arabs were distinguished all over the world for their amazing power of memory, and after groping for centuries in the darkness of ignorance they had received the guidance of the Holy Qurān which they considered to be the most cherished possession of their lives. Anybody with an understanding of their character and bent of mind can very well visualise what pains they must have taken to commit it to their memory. Hence, within a fairly short time, there were on hand a large group of the pious Companions who had the entire Qurān committed flawlessly to their memory. Traditions denote that this group had included Sayyidina Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Ali, Ṭalḥah, Sa'ad, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥuzayfah bin Yamān, Sālim Maula Abi Huzayfah, Abu Hurayrah, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar' 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Amr bin 'Aas, Mu'āwiyah, 'Abdullah bin Zubayr, 'Abdullah bin Ṣā'ib, Sayyidah 'Āishah, Sayyidah Ḥafṣa, Sayyidah Umm Salamah, Sayyidah Umm Warqah,

210: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān v1, p 4

Ubayy bin Ka'b, Mu'āz bin Jabal, Abu Ḥalīmah Mu'az Zayd bin Thābit, Abu Dardā, Mujamma' bin Jāriyah, Muslimah bin Mukhallad, Anas bin Malik, Aqabah bin 'Āmir, Tamīm Dāramī, Abu Mūsa Ash 'arī and Abu Zayd (رضی الله تعالٰی عنهم اجمعین).[211]

These are the names of only some of those Companions whose names have been preserved as "Ḥāfiẓ of Qurān" (one who has committed the Qurān to memory) in various traditions, Otherwise, there must be numerous others who had memorised the whole Qurān but their names could not be preserved in the traditions in that capacity. This is corroborated by the fact that there had been times when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had sent up to seventy recitors for teaching the Qurān only to one tribe. There are traditions mentioning the martyrdom of seventy recitors from among his Companions in the battle of B'iy'r Ma'ūnah, and an equal number of Ḥāfiẓ Companions was martyred in the battle of Yamamah after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.[212] Actually, another account places the number of martyred Companions at Yamamah at 700 Recitors.[213]

These facts relate only to the Companions who knew the entire Qurān by heart whereas the number of those who had memorised different portions of the Qurān is countless.[214]

In short, the preservation of the Qurān in the early days of Islam was based on committing it to the memory. This was the safest and most reliable method in view of the circumstances of that time because the number of literate persons in those days was very small, and printing press

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211: An-Nashr fil Qirā'at il 'Ashr. v1 p6. Al-Itqān. v1, pp73-74 Tarīkh ul Qurān Karwi p60.

212: Al-Itqān v1, p73.

213: 'Umdat-ul-Qārī v1, 20, pp.16,17. Damascus.

214: Al-Burhān fi 'Ulūm-al-Qurān by Zarkashī v1, pp241, 243.

and other means of publication were unknown. Hence, if reliance was placed on pen and paper, neither a wide publicity was possible nor a reliable preservation would have been practical. Instead, Allah had endowed the people of Arabia with such a prodigious memory that many among them had thousands of couplets at their finger tips. The common run of men would remember by heart not only their own genealogies and those of their families but even those of their horses. Therefore, this power of memory was well utilised for the preservation of the Holy Qurān, and it was through this means that the verse and chapters of the Qurān reached every nook and corner of Arabia.

How rapidly the knowledge of Qurān spread in this way can be judged from the incident of 'Amr ibn Salamah, a seven year old child living on the bank of a natural spring where the travellers used to rest for a while. He had not yet accepted Islam but simply by listening from the passers-by he had memorised a good deal of the Qurān before entering the fold of Islam.[215]

## WRITING OF THE QURĀN IN THE PROPHETIC ERA

### THE FIRST STAGE

Although the preservation of the Qurān had rested mainly upon the memory of the Companions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had made special arrangements to have it written as well. The method used for this purpose has been described by Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit ؓ in a tradition as under:

كنت اكتب الوحى لرسول اللهصلى الله عليه وسلم وكان اذا

215: Saḥiḥ Bukhāri.

نزل عليه الوحى اخذته برحاء شديدة و عرقا مثل الجُمان ثم
سرّى عنه ، فكنت ادخل عليه بقطعة الكتف او كسوة فاكتب
وهو يُملى عليّ فما افرغ حتى تكاد رجلى تنكسر من نقل القران
حتّى اقول لا امشى على رِجلى ابداً فاذا فرغت قال اقرأ فاقره فان
كان فيه سقط اقامه ثم اخرج به الى الناس

(رواه الطبرانيؒ في الاوسط و رجاله موثقون الا ان فيه و جدت فى كتاب خالى فهو رجاله (مجمع الزوائد: نورالدين الهيثميؒ، ص ١٥٢، ج ١، باب عرض الكتاب بعد املائه ، دارالكتاب العربى ، بيروت ١٩٦٧ء))

I used to write down the revelations (*Waḥy*) for the Prophet ﷺ. When the revelation came to him he felt intense heat and drops of perspiration used to roll down on his body like pearls. When this state was over I used to fetch a shoulder bone or a piece of something else. He used to go on dictating and I used to write it down.

When I finished writing the sheer weight of transcription gave me the feeling that my leg would break and I would not be able to walk any more. Anyhow, when I had finished writing. He would say, "Read", and I would read it back to him. If there was an omission or error he used to correct it and then let it be brought before the people.[216]

The transcription of revelations was not assigned to Zayd bin Thābit alone but other Companions were appointed for this purpose who used to do the task as and when required. The number of these writers has been counted up to forty[217(a)], but more wellknown among them are the following;

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216: Ṭabarānī: Al-Awsaṭ (Majma'az-zawāid, Nuruddin Al-Haythmī v1. p152, Darul. Kitāb il 'Arabi, Bairut, 1967.

217(a): 'ulūmul Qurān, Ṣabḥi Ṣaliḥ. (Urdu translation by Ghulam Aḥmad Hurayri p 101. Malik Brother, Lyalpur 1968)

Sayyidina Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Ali, Ubayy bin Ka'ab, Abdullah bin Abi Sarḥ, Zubayr bin 'Awwām, Khālid bin Sa'īd bin Al-'Aas, Abān bin Sa'īd bin Al-'Āas, Aban ibn Sa'id ibn al-Aas, Ḥanẓalah Ibn ur Rab'ī, Mu'qīb bin Abi Faṭimah, Abdullah bin Arqam Az-Zuhri, Shurahbeel bin Hasnah, Abdullah bin Rawahah,[217(b)] 'Āmir bin Fuhayrah, 'Amr bin Al 'Aās, Thābit bin Qais bin Shammās, Mughīra bin Sha'abah, Khalid bin Walīd, Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyān, Zayd bin Thābit.[218]

Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ has stated that it was the practice of the Prophet ﷺ apart from dictating a *Waḥy* he also instructed the scribe to write it after such and such verses in such and such *Surah*. Hence it was being written accordingly.[219]

As paper was a scarce commodity in Arabia, the Qurānic revelations were written mostly on tablets of stone, parchments of leather, branches of date-trees, pieces of bamboos, leaves of trees and animal bones. But at times pieces of paper were also used.[220]

Thus, in the days of the Prophet ﷺ one copy of the Qurān consisted of that which he had got written under his personal supervision, though it was not in a book form but in the shape of different parchments. Alongwith this, some Companions also used to write down the Qurānic verses for their personal record. This was being practised from the very beginning of Islam, as is evidenced by the fact that Sayyidah Fātimah bint al-Khaṭṭāb رضى الله تعالى عنها the sister of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ and her husband Sa'īd bin Zayd ﷺ had accepted Islam before Sayyidina 'Umar

217(b): up to here from Fathul Bāri v9, p18.

218: Zadul Ma'ād, Ibnil Qayyim v1, p30, Maminniya Press Egypt.

219: Fathul Bārī v9, p18, with ref: Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Nisāi, Abu Dāwood, Ibn Ḥibban, Hākim.

220: Ibid.v9, p11, 'Umdatul Qāri v20, P17 AL Mumiria Press Damascus.

ﷺ, and on hearing that when he entered their house in a rage he found a parchment on which the verses of *Surah Ṭahā* were written and Sayyidina Khabbāb Bin Aratt ؓ was teaching them.[221]

In addition to this, there are several traditions which indicate that the Companions had with them individually written copies of complete or incomplete Qurān. For example, Bukhāri has quoted Ibn 'Umar as saying:

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم نهى ان يسافر بالقران الى ارض العدوّ۔

The Prophet ﷺ has disallowed the carrying along of the Qurān in enemy land.

(Bukhāri, Book of Jihad v.1. Pp419.420.)

Also, there occurs a tradition in Mu'ajjam Tabrāni that the Prophet ﷺ said:

قرأة الرجل فى غيرالمصحف الف درجة و قرأته فى المصحف تضاعف علٰى ذٰلك الفى درجة

((مجمع الزوائد ص١٦٥، ج ١٠ مطبوعه بيروت (قال الهيثمي رواه الطبراني و فيه ابو سعيد بن عون وثقه ابن معين فى رواية وضعفه فى رواية أخرى و بقية رجاله ثقات))

If anyone recites the Qurān without seeing the transcription the reward is one thousand times, and if he reads it from the transcription the reward is two thousand times.[222]

The above two traditions clearly indicate that the Comapanions did possess written copies of the Qurān

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221: Sunan Dār Qutnī v1, p123, printed at Madīnah, Bab-i-Nahyi Muḥaddith 'An MassilQurān, wa Majma'-uz-zawāid Haythmī v9, p61 printed Bairut. Manāqib 'Umar wa Sīrah Ibn Hishām, Zād ul Ma'ād v1, p186-187. Ḥāfiẓ Zayl'ī Confims it authentic.

222: Al-Zawāid v7, p165 printed at Bairut.

during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. If it were not so, the question of reading from the transcription or carrying it to enemy land does not arise. (Bukhāri, Book of Jihad, v 1)

## COLLECTION OF THE QURĀN DURING THE PERIOD OF SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR ﷺ

### SECOND STAGE

The copies of Qurān prepared during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ were written on different kinds of materials. Some verses were written on leather, some on leaves of trees, some on bones etc. Copies of the whole Qurān were very few. Some Companions had with them only one *Surah*, some had five or ten and some had only a few verses. Some of them had verses with explanatory notes also written with them.

It was for this reason that Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ thought it necessary during his period of caliphate that all the scattered portions of the Holy Qurān should be collected and preserved. What motivated him to take this step has been described by Zayd bin Thābit, "Immediately after the battle of Yamamah, Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ one day sent for me, and when I went to him, Sayyidina Umar ﷺ was also present there, Abu Bakr ﷺ said to me, Umar has just now told me that a large number of Ḥuffāẓ (those who had learnt the Qurān by heart) have been martyred in the battle of Yamamah. If we go on losing them in different places like that, I fear that a large portion of the Qurān may become extinct, hence I propose that you undertake the task of collection of the Qurān from different places. I told Umar, How can I do a thing which the Prophet ﷺ himself did not do? Umar said, and he kept on repeating, 'By God! This work is all good and nothing but good, until the light of its truth dawned on me too, and now my opinion is the

same as Umar. After that Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ said to me, you are young and sensible. We have no lack of trust in you. You had also been a regular scribe of the *Waḥy* during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ So, you search for all the verses of the Qurān and collect them together."

Zay'd bin Thābit says "By God! Carrying a mountain on their orders would have been a lighter burden for me than was collecting the Qurān. I asked him, 'How is it that you have undertaken the task that was not done by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself?" Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ said:

> 'By God! this is all good', and he kept on repeating these words till Allah gave me insight for adopting the same opinion that was held by Abu Bakr, and Umar رضی الله عنهما. Consequently, I started searching for the verses of the Qurān and it was from the branches of date-palms, slabs of stones and memory of people that I finally collected the Holy Qurān."[223]

At this point, while we are dealing with the process of collection of the Qurān, we should have a clear perception of the method used by Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ. He himself was a Ḥāfiẓ of the Qurān and, therefore, he could have written down the whole Qurān from his memory. In addition to that, there were hundreds of Companions present at that time who had memorised the whole of Qurān who could still have been written down by entrusting this duty to a group of them. Also, the copies of the Qurān that had been written down during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ could have been used by Sayyidina Zayd ﷺ to make his copy of the Qurān. But as a precaution he did not limit himself to any of these methods. He used all these methods simultaneously, but even then he did not include any verse in his transcription unless he had received written and oral

223. Saḥiḥ Bukhāri and Fatḥ ul Bāri, v9, p8-11.

testimonies proving its uninterrupted succession. In addition, the verses that the Prophet ﷺ had got written under his personal supervision, were still preserved by different Companions. Sayyidina Zayd ؓ collected them together so that the new copy be made from them. Consequently, a public proclamation was made that anyone possessing any written verses of the Holy Qurān should bring them over to Sayyidina Zayd[224] and when anyone brought a written verse to him he used to verify its authenticity by the following four methods.

1. To begin with, he verified it from his own memory.
2. When someone came forward with a verse, he and Sayyidina 'Umar ؓ used to receive it jointly, because, as narratives confirm, the latter was also deputed by Abu Bakr to work with Sayyidina Zayd, and he was also a Ḥāfiẓ.[225] Hence he too, used to verify it from his memory.
3. No written verse was accepted until two reliable witnesses had testified that it was written in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ 'Allāmah Suyūṭi has stated that apparently the witnesses also testified that those written verses were presented before the Prophet ﷺ in the year of his death and he had affirmed that they were in accordance with the "Seven Letters" on which the Qurān was revealed.[226] This statement of 'Allāmah Suyūṭi has been supported by several traditions.
4. After that, these written verses were collated with the collections that different Companions had prepared for themselves.[227] According to Imām Abu Shāmah the

224: Fatḥ ul Bārī v9, p11 ref. Ibn Abu Dāwood in the Kitab ul Maṣāḥif.
225: Ibid.
226: Al-Itqān v1, p60.
227: Al-Burhān-fi-'ulū mil Qurān v1, p238.

purpose of this method was that utmost care be taken in the transcription of the Qurān, and rather than rely on memory, it should be transcribed exactly from the verses that were written in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.[228]

If this functional methodology behind the collection of the Qurān during the period of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ؓ is kept in mind,it would become very easy to understand what Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit meant, "I found the last verses of *Surah* Al-Barāah starting with:

لَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ..................الخ

certainly, there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves... (9:128,129)

—with Sayyidina Abu Khuzaymah only. They were not found with anyone else except him." This never means that no person other than Abu Khuzaymah remembered these verses, or nobody else had them in writing, or anyone other than him did not know of their being part of the Qurān. But it means that with the exception of Abu Khuzayamah these verses were not found with anyone of those who were coming with different written verses as they were dictated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Otherwise, as far as the fact of these verses being part of the Qurān is concerned, it was known to every one through uninterrupted succession. There were hundreds of Companions who knew the whole Qurān by heart and, hence, they also knew these verses. Further, these were also present in written form on the complete collections of the Qurānic verses preserved by various Companions. Because he had taken the foregoing precautions he waited for confirmation through the third

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228: Al-Itqān v1, p20

method. As for the other verses they were verified in all the methods set by Sayyidina Zayd ﷺ and were found written with many Companions, many of whom brought each verse. But, among those written separately under the supervision of the Prophet ﷺ these verses were found only with Sayyidina Abu Khuzaymah ﷺ and not with anyone else.[229]

So, in every way possible, it was with utmost care that Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ collected the Qurānic verses and transcribed them in the proper order on sheets of paper.[230] However, every *Surah* was written separately. Hence, this consisted of a number of transcripts and in the terminology of the Qurān it was called "*Umm*", and it had the following features:

(1) In this copy, the Qurānic verses were arranged in accordance with the order fixed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ but the *Surahs* were not arranged, and every *Surah* was written and kept separately.[231]
(2) All the "Seven Letters" were incorporated in this copy.[232]
(3) This copy was written in Hīrī script.[233]
(4) Only those verses were included whose recital was not abrogated.
(5) The purpose of this transcription was to prepare an organised document with the collective endorsement of the entire *Ummah*, so that reference can be made to it when required.

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229: Al-Burhān fil 'Ulūmil Qurān, v1, p234-235.
230: Al-Itqān, v1, p60. According to one report this Copy too was transcribed on leather but Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar rejects this report.
231: Al-Itqān v1, p60.
232: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān v1. pp.246,247, and Tarīkh ul Qurān by Karvī p28.
233: Tarīkh-ul-Qurān by Abdus Samad Ṣārim p43. Lahore Press 1963.

If the above details regarding the compilation of the Quran are kept in mind, it will be easy to comprehend the meaning of the tradition which states that Sayyidina 'Ali ﷺ had compiled the Quran immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In fact it was not only Sayyidina 'Ali ﷺ but many other Companions had also compiled their individual copies. But a standard copy compiled with the collective endorsement of the entire *Ummah*, was first prepared by Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ.

The transcripts written on the orders of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ remained with him during his lifetime. Then they remained with Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ and on his martyrdom they were transferred to the custody of Sayyidah Ḥafṣah[234] in accordance with his instructions. Then Marwān bin Hākam asked for them from Sayyidah Ḥafṣah ﷺ but she refused to give them to him. After her death Marwān sent for them and had them burnt because a consensus had been reached by then that with regard to the script and arrangement of *Surahs* it was obligatory to follow the transcripts of *Surahs* prepared by Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ only, and no such copy should exist that was at variance with them.[235]

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234. Fatḥ-ul-Bāri, v9, pp12,13.
235: Ibid. p16.

# COLLECTION OF THE QURĀN IN THE PERIOD OF SAYYIDINA 'UTHMĀN' ﷺ

## THRID STAGE

When Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ became the Caliph, Islam had already spread to the far-flung areas of Byzantine and Iran. People embracing Islam in the new areas used to learn the Qurān from the Muslim soldiers or from the traders from whom they got the blessing of Islam. Also, as has already been described, the Qurān was revealed on "Seven Letters" and different Companions had learnt it from the Holy Prophet ﷺ according to different recitals. Hence, every Companion taught the Qurān to his disciples in accordance with the particular reading he had learnt from the Prophet ﷺ. In this manner variations in recital reached distant countries. As long as the people were aware that the Qurān was revealed on "Seven Letters", these variations caused no harm. But when these variations reached far-out countries and the fact that the Qurān was revealed on "Seven Letters" could not gain due publicity, disputes among people started growing up. Some people insisted that their own reading was correct and that of others incorrect. These disputes gave rise to the danger on the one hand, that the people might fall into the grave error of declaring as incorrect the recitals of the Qurān that had been transmitted through uninterrupted succession. On the other hand, there was no standard copy of the Qurān anywhere in the world, except the one in Madina that was transcribed by Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ, that could be the rallying authority for the entire *Ummah*. Since other copies were written

individually, and in them, there was no provision to incorporate all the seven versions of recital, the only reliable method to resolve these disputes was that transcripts incorporating all the valid recitals be disseminated throughout the Islamic world, and through them it could be decided as to which recital is correct? Sayyidina 'Uthmān accomplished this remarkable feat during the period of his Caliphate.

We learn the details of this achievement through an account that Ḥuzayfah bin Yamān who was engaged in Jihad on the Armenian-Azerbaijan front noticed that differences were arising among people about the correct recital of the Qurān. So, on his return to Madinah he went straight to Sayyidina 'Uthmān and said, "O Amir-al-Mu'minīn (Leader of the Believers)! Before this nation falls a prey to dissensions about the Book of Allah like the Jews and Christians you must do something about it." Sayyidina 'Uthmān asked, "What is the matter"? He said, "I was on the Jihad mission at the Armenian front where I saw that the recital by the people of Syria following that of Ubayy bin Ka'ab was never heard by the people of Iraq, while the people of Iraq, who follow the recital of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, have never heard the recital made by the people of Syria. As a result they call each other unbelievers."

Sayyidina 'Uthmān had himself sensed this danger much earlier. He was informed that even in Madinah such incidents had occurred wherein someone taught the Qurān according to one recital while another teacher taught it according to a second recital: and when the students of different teachers met together there arose differences among them and sometimes it embroiled the teachers as well, and they too declared each other's reading to be incorrect. When Ḥuzayfah bin Yamān drew his

attention to this danger, Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ convened a meeting of some esteemed Companions and consulted them. He said, "I have been informed that there are people who say to each other, 'My recital is better than yours', and this may be carried to the limits of blasphemy (unbelief). So, what is your opinion in this matter?" The Companions asked Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ himself as to what were his own thoughts about it. He said,

"My opinion is that we should unite every one on one transcription so that no difference or division may occur."

The Companions approved and supported his veiw.

Consequently, Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ gathered people together and addressed them, "You are living so close to me in Madinah yet you falsify each other and differ with each other in respect of the recitals of the Qurān. It is obvious that those who are far away from me must be falsifying and disapproving each other more vehemently. Therefore, let everyone join together to prepare a copy of the Qurān to follow which should be obligatory for all."

For this purpose, Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ sent a message to Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضی اللہ تعالٰی عنہا requesting her to let him have the holy transcripts of the Qurānic text (prepared during the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ and which she had in her custody). He promised that these would be returned to her after they had been copied down. She sent them to him. He then formed a group of four Companions comprising Sayyidina Zayd bin Thabit, 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr, Sa'eed ibn al-'Aas and Abdur Raḥmān bin Ḥārith bin Hishām. This group was entrusted with the task of making several transcripts from the original copy compiled by Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ, with the *Surahs* also arranged in sequence. One of these four Sayyidina Zayd, was an Ansar while the three were Quraysh. Therefore, Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ said to them,

"If you and Zayd differ anywhere in the Qurān (that is, differ as to how a certain letter should be written) you would write it in the language of the Quraysh because the Holy Qurān has been revealed in their language."

Basically, this task was entrusted to the above named four distinguished persons, but subsequently other Companions also were called upon to assist them so that, according to Ibn Abi Dāwood ﷺ their number had risen to twelve. These included Ubayy bin Ka'ab, Sayyidina Kathīr bin Aflaḥ, Sayyidina Mālik bin Abi 'Āmir, Sayyidina Anas bin Mālik and Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Abbās ﷺ. This group of Companions performed the following functions in connection with the transcription of Holy Qurān:[236]

1. In the transcript prepared during the period of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ *Surahs* were not arranged in a sequence, but each of them was written separately. They arranged them in their proper sequence as part of a single transcript.[237]
2. The verses of the Qurān were written to accommodate all the successive un-interrupted recitals in the script. Therefore, no dots or diacritical marks were placed on them so that they could be read in accordance with all the valid recitals. For instance, they wrote ننسرها in order that it could be read both as نَنْشُرُهَا (Nanshuruhā) and نُنْشِزُهَا, (Nunshizuhā) because both these recitals were correct.[238]
3. Upto that time there existed only one single copy of the Holy Qurān that was complete, authentic, standard and collectively attested by the entire *Ummah*. They prepared several transcripts of this freshly written copy of the Qurān. It is generally believed that Sayyidina

236: Fataḥ al Bāri v9. p13-15.
237: Mustadrak Ḥākim, v2, p229.
238: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān, v1, p253, 254.

'Uthmān ﷺ got five transcripts prepared, but Abu Ḥātim Sajistāni has stated that a total of seven transcripts were prepared. Of those, one was sent to Makkah and one each to Syria, Yaman, Baḥrain, Basra and Kufah, and one was preserved in Madinah.[239]

4. In order to accomplish the task cited above these eminent Companions basically kept before them the transcripts that were written during the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ. But as an added precaution they adopted the same method that was employed during the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ. Consequently, individual transcripts preserved by different Companions were once again brought together and it was, yet another collation with these, that the new transcripts were prepared. This time a verse of *Surah Al-Aḥzab*,

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ

Among the Believers are men..... (33:23)

separately written was found only with Sayyidina Khuzaymah bin Thābit Ansari. As we have explained earlier, it does not mean that nobody else had remembered this verse, because Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit has said..

فقدت اية من الاحزاب حين نسخنا المصحف قد كنت اسمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقرأبها فالتمسناها فوجدناها مع خزيمة بن ثابت الانصارىؓ۔

"While writing the transcription I did not find the verse of *Surah Al-Aḥzāb* which I used to hear from the Prophet ﷺ when we searched for it we found it with

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239: Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhāri, Fatḥ-ul-Bāri v9, p17.

Khuzaymah bin Thābit Ansari.[240]

It is quite apparent from the above narration that this verse was the one which Zayd and other Companions remembered very well. Similarly, it also does not mean that this verse was not written anywhere else, because it was present in the transcripts written during the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ, and was also included in the individual manuscripts preserved by various Companions. But as was done in the days of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ, this time also, all those scattered documents, written by the Companions individually, were collected together. Therefore, Zayd ﷺ and his associates did not transcribe any verse in those copies until they found it in those manuscripts as well. As such, other verses were found written separately with several Companions, but this verse from *Surah Al-Aḥzab* could not be obtained as a separate manuscript from anyone except Khuzaymah bin Thābit.

5. After having several of these standard transcripts of the Holy Qurān prepared, Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ got all the other manuscripts individually prepared by Companions burnt, so that all transcripts of the Qurān become uniform in terms of script, incorporation of accepted recitals and the sequence of *Suraḥ*, leaving no room for any differences.

The entire *Ummah* acknowledged this achievement of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ with admiration, and all the Companions extended their full support in this venture. Only Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was somewhat unhappy about it, the reasons of which have been mentioned in the discussion on "Seven Letters". Sayyidina 'Ali bin Abu Tālib ﷺ remarked:

240: Bukhāri, Fatḥ-ul-Bāri v9, p17

لا تقولوا فی عثمان رضی اللہ عنہ الا خیراً فواللّٰہ ما فعل الذی فعل فی المصاحف الا عن ملأ منا (فتح الباری، ص ١٥، ج٩، بحوالہ ابن ابی داؤد بسند صحیح)

"Say nothing about 'Uthmān ﷺ except what is good for him. By God! whatever he did in connection with the transcription of the Qurān was done in the presence of all of us and with our advice and counsel."[241]

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241: Fath-ul-Bāri v9, p15. Raf: Ibn Aby Dāwood.

# STEPS TAKEN TO FACILITATE RECITATION OF THE QURĀN

## FOURTH STAGE

After the afore-mentioned achievement of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ the *Ummah* has reached a consensus that it is not permissible to write the text of the Holy Qurān in any manner other than the one adopted by him. Consequently, thence on, all the transcripts of the Qurān were written in accordance with this script and the Companions and their successors prepared and circulated more and more copies of the Qurān on this script.

But the script of these Qurānic transcriptions was still without dots and diacritical marks that made it difficult for the non-Arabs to recite them freely. As Islam spread far and wide in non-Arab countries, it was felt that dots and diacritical marks must be put so that the people may recite it easily. Several steps were taken to achieve this purpose, a short history of which is given below.

## DOTS

It was not customary with the early Arabs to put dots on letters, and scribes used to write blank letters. The readers were so used to this style that they had practically no difficulty in reading the dot-less writings and they could easily distinguish between doubtful letters by reference to the context. Rather, it was very often considered to be an insult to put dots. Historian Madā'inī has quoted an author as under:

كثرة النقط فى الكتاب سوء ظن بالمكتوب اليه ـ

(صبح الاعشى للقلقشندى، ص ١٥٤، ج٣، مطبعة اميريه، ١٩٨٤/١٦٥٤، القاهره ١٣٣٢ه)

To put too many dots in a letter amounts to suspicion about (the comprehension of) the addressee.[242]

Hence transcripts of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ were devoid of any dots, and apart from the prevalent custom its major purpose was that all the successive uninterrupted recitals may be incorporated in that script. But later on, dots were placed on letters for the convenience of non-Arabs and less educated Muslims.

Reports differ as to who was the first to place dots on the Qurānic transcript. Some reports say that this feat was first of all accomplished by Abul Aswad Du'ilī.[243] Some say that he did it on the instructions of Sayyidina Ali ﷺ.[237] Still others say that the Governor of Kufah, Ziyad bin Abi Sufyān asked him to do this task[244]. There are reports too that Abdul Mālik bin Marwān asked him to do it.[246] There is yet another report that Ḥajjāj bin Yusuf[245] got it done with the help of Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Yaḥyā bin Ya'mūr and Naṣr bin 'Āsim Laythi[247]. Some scholars think that the inventor of these dots had himself placed them in the Qurānic script, and no conception of dots existed before this. But 'Allāmah Qalqashandi (who was the most renowned researcher in the art of script and writings) has refuted it and proved that dots had been invented long before that. According to one report, the inventors of Arabic writing script were Murāmar bin Murrah, Aslam

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242: Ṣubḥ al-'Āsha al Qalqashandī v3, p154 Amīriy Press Cairo 1332 AH.

243: Al-burhān fi-Ulūm-i-Qurān v1, p 250 & Al-Itqān v2, p171.

244: Ṣubḥ-ul-'Ashā v3, p155.

245: Al-burhān p250, 251, 14th Edn.

246: Al-Itqān v2, p171.

247: Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubi v1, p63, and Tārīkh ul-Qurān.,Karwi, p181.

bin Sidrah and 'Āmir bin Jadarah of the tribe of Bolān. Murāmar invented the shapes of the letters. Aslam laid down the methods for breaking and combining the words and letters and 'Āmir founded the dots[248]. Yet another report says that the credit for the first use of dots goes to Abu Sufyān bin Umaiyyah, the grandfather of Abu Sufyan bin Ḥarb, who had learnt them from the people of Ambar[249]. Thus, the dots were invented much earlier but the Qurānic transcripts were kept free of them for various reasons. Whoever placed dots on the Qurānic letters was not the inventor of dots, but he was the first person to use them in the Qurānic script.[250]

## DIACRITICAL MARKS

In the beginning, like dots, the Qurān was devoid of diacritical marks (the fatḥa, kasrah and ḍamma) and likewise. There are varying reports as to who put these marks first? Some say this was first done by Abul Aswad Du'ili. Some say that Hajjāj bin Yūsuf got this done by Yaḥya bin Ya'mur and Nasr bin 'Āsim al-Laythī[251]. Keeping in view all the reports in this connection, it appears that diacritical marks were first invented by Abul Aswad Du'ili but they were different from what they are today. Instead, for short vowel 'a' (fat-ḥa) he placed a dot over the letter (.), for short vowel 'i' (Kasrah) a dot under the letter (.) for short vowel 'u' (dhammah) a dot in front of the letter (.) and for nunnation (Tanwīn) two dots (..; .. ..)[252]. Later on, Khalīl bin Aḥmad founded the signs of (glottal stop, Ḥamzah) and doubling (Tashdīd)[253]. After that Ḥajjāj bin

248: Ṣubḥ-ul-A'shā v3, p 12.
249: Ibid v3, p13.
250: Ibid v3, p155.
251: Tafsīr ul-Qurṭubi v1 p63.
252: Ṣubḥ-ul-A'asha v3, p160. Tarīkh-ul-Qurān Karwī p180.
253: Al-Itqān v2, p171, Ṣubḥ-ul-A'shā v3 p161.

Yūsuf requested Yaḥya bin Ya'mur, Naṣr bin Āṣim Al-Laythī and Hasan Al-Baṣri to put both the dots and diacritical marks on the Qurānic letters. On this occasion the present forms of diacritical marks were chosen rather than the use of dots so that they may not be confused with the intrinsic dots of the letters. Allah knows best.

## STAGES (AHZĀB & MANĀZIL)

It was customary with the Companions and their successors that they would complete the recital of the entire Qurān in one week. For this purpose, they had fixed portions for their daily recitation. Each such portion is known as '*Ḥizb*' or 'Manzil'. In this way the Qurān has been divided into seven stages of recitation. Sayyidina Aws bin Ḥuzayfah states that he asked the Companions as to how many stages of recital they had divided the Qurān into. They replied the first *Ḥizb* consists of three *surahs* the second of five, the third of seven, the fourth of nine, the fifth of eleven, the sixth of thirteen and the final *Ḥizb* from *Surah Qāf* to the end of the Qurān.[254]

## PARTS (AJZĀ)

Today, the Qurān is divided into thirty parts (AJZĀ-plural of JUZ). This division in parts has nothing to do with the meaning of the Qurān, but has been done as a teaching aid for children, in thirty equal parts. Thus, we see that there are places where a part ends with an unfinished statement. It is difficult to say with certainty as to who made this division in thirty parts? Some people think that during the transcription of the Qurān Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ had got it written in thirty parts and hence this division dates back to his time[255]. But I could not find any

254: Al-burhān fi 'Ulūmil Qurān. v1, p250.
255: Tarīkh-ul-Qurān by Abduṣ Ṣamad Ṣārim.

proof of this theory in the works of earlier scholars. However, 'Allāmah Badruddin Zarkashi has wirtten that the thirty parts of the Qurān have been in popular use and they customarily appear in the Qurānic transcripts used in schools. It appears that this division was made after the period of the Companions to facilitate teching of the Qurān. Allah knows best.

## FIVES & TENS (AKHMĀS AND A'SHĀR)

Another sign used in the Qurānic transcriptions in early centuries was the placing of the sign خ or خمس after every five verses, and ع or عشر after every ten verses, in the margin. The former kind of signs were called '*Akhmās*' five and the latter *A'shār*[256]. Holding divergent veiws, some of the early scholars, considered these signs permissible while others held them to be reprehensible[257]. It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty as to who put these signs first? One report says that the 'Abbāsi Caliph Ma'mūn first ordered that they be marked[258]. But both these reports do not appear to be correct since the idea of A'shār appears to be present in the days of the Companions as well. Ibn Abi Shaybah, narrates in his book (Musannaf) that:

عن مسروق عن عبد اللهؓ انه كره التعشير فى المصحف

(مصنف ابن ابی شیبۃ، ص ۴۹۷، ج ۲، کتاب الصلوۃ، مطبعۃ العلوم الشرقیۃ، دکن ۱۳۸۷ھ)

Masrūq says that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd considered the putting of sign of A'shar in Qurānic script as detestable[259].

From this it appears that the concept of "A'shar" was present during the days of the Companions.

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256: Manāhil-ul-'Irfān v1, p403.
257: Al-Itqān v2, p171.
258: Al-Burhān v1, p251.
259: Musannaf Ibn Abi Shyba v2, p497. 'Ulūm-ul-Sharqiyah Press Deccan 1387 AH.

## SECTION (RUKŪ')

Another sign that came into use later on and is still prevalent is the sign of RUKU', and its placement depends on the meanings whereby a sign ع is placed on the conclusion of a statement in the margin. Despite all efforts I could not locate anything authentic to tell us who originated this sign and in what period it was done. Some people think that "*Rukū'āt*" were also determined during the time of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ[260] but no authentic proof to this claim is traceable in the traditions. However, one thing is certain that the purpose of this sign is to determine an average portion of the verses which could be recited in one unit (Raka'ah) of *Salah*. It is called *Ruku'* (bending) so as to indicate bowing (going into semi prostration) during *Salah* at this point. It is stated in Faṭāwā 'Ālamgīriyah:

ان المشائخ رحمهم الله جعلوا القران علٰى خمسمأة واربعين ركوعاً واعلموا ذلك فى المصاحف حتى يحصل الختم فى ليلة السابع والعشرين (فتاوىٰ عالمگیریہ، فصل التراویح، ص ۹۴، ج ۱، مطبوعہ نو لکشور)

The Shaykhs have divided the Qurān into 540 'Rukū'āt' (sections) and placed its signs on the transcriptions so that the Qurān may be completed on the 27th night (of Ramadan in Salāt-tut-Tarāvih.)[261]

## SIGNS TO STOP (RUMŪZ-E-AWQĀF)

Rumūz ul-awqāf (signs to pause). Another useful step taken to facilitate recitation of the Qurān was to provide the verse with signs to indicate pauses. They are called *Rumuz ul-Awqāf*. Their purpose is to help a person who does not

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260: Tarīkh-ul-Qurān by Abduṣ Ṣamad Ṣārim. p81.
261: Fatawa 'Ālamgīriyah v1, p 94.

know Arabic to stop at the appropriate place during his recitation, and thus avoid any change in the meaning by stopping at the wrong place. Most of these signs were first introduced by 'Allāmah Abu 'Abdullah Muḥammad bin Ṭyfūr Sajāwandī.[262]

These signs are explained below:

ط (ṭa). It is an abreviation for *al-waqful mutlaq*, it indictes that the statement stands completed at this point. Therefore it is better to stop here.

ج (jīm) It is an abbreviation for *al-waqful-jāiz*. It means that it is permissible to stop here.

ز. Stopping here is correct but it is better not to stop. It is the short form for *al-waqf al-mujawwaz*.

(Ṣād) ص. It stands for *al-waqf al-murakhkhas*. It means that the statement continues further but, because the sentence became too long, the reader may take a stop to breathe at this point rather than elsewhere in the sentences.[263]

(mīm) م. It stands for *al-Waqf al-lāzim*. This sign denotes that there is a chance of grave error in the meaning if a stop is not made here, hence it is better to stop here. Some people call it "Obligatory stop" but not in the juristic sense that non-compliance would be sinful. In fact the purpose is to stress that making a stop here is the most preferable of all stops.[264]

(lām) لا. It is an abbreviation for *la taqif* (do not stop here) but this does not mean that a stop here is unlawful. Rather, it is used at places where there is no harm in stopping, and starting with the next word is also permissible. So, it actually means that if a stop is made here, it is better to go back and read over again[265]

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262 An-Nashr fil Qiraāt 11 'Ashr, Ibn ul Jazarī v1, p225.

263. Al-Minḥ ul-Fikriyah by Mullah Ali Qāri, p63.

264. An-Nashr v1, p231.

265 An-Nashr, p233.

—rather than continuing on the next words.

As far as the origin of the above signs is concerned, it is conclusively proved that they were invented by 'Allāmah Sajāwandī. However, some other signs are also found in the transcriptions of the Qurān, for example:

مع This is an abbreviation of معانقه. This sign is inserted where two explanations of a single verse are possible. According to one explanation, the stop will be made at one given place, while according to another explanation this will be made at another place. Thus, a stop can be made at either of the two places but not at both places. For example:

ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ ∴ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ ∴ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ ——— الخ

If a pause is made at التورٰة then it is not proper to pause again at الانجيل and if a pause will be made at الانجيل then it is not correct to pause at التورٰة. However, if a stop is not made at both places, that will be correct. It is also called *al-muqābilah*. It was first of all pointed out by Imām Abul Faḍl Rāzi.

سكتة This indicates *Saktah*. It means reader should stop here but without breaking the breath. It is generally inserted at a place where non-stop reading may convey an erroneous meaning.

وقفة At this sign, the reader should stop a little longer than *saktah* (سكتة) still not breaking the breath.

ق: It is the abbreviation of *qīla 'alai hil waqf* قيل عليه الوقف meaning thereby that some phonetists plead to stop here while other's do not.

قف: This is *qif*. It means 'stop here' and it is inserted where the reader may think that a stop here was not correct.

صلے: It is the abbreviation of الوصل اولى (*al waṣl ūla*) It means

that a non-stop reading is desirable here.

صل: It is the abbreviation of *qad ȳuṣal*.

Some recitors stop here while others prefer not to. These indications are quite well-known but I could not ascertain who invented them.

# PRINTING OF THE HOLY QURĀN

## FIFTH STAGE

Before the invention of the printing press, all copies of the Qurān were hand written by pen, and for this purpose, there always has been a large group of calligraphers who kept themselves busy in nothing but the calligraphy of the Qurān. The amount of labour put in by Muslims in writing the words of the Qurān in better and better styles, and the way they demonstrated their deep love for this exalted Book has a long and interesting history of its own which would need an independent publication. This is not the appropriate place to go into such details.

With the inventions of the printing press, the Holy Qurān was first printed at Hamburg in 1113 Hijrah, a copy of which is still preserved in *Dar-ul-Kutub al Miṣriyyah* in Egypt. After that several orientalists got many editions of the Qurān published but they could not gain popularity in the Islamic world. After that Maula'y 'Uthmān was the first Muslim who had one transcription of the Qurān printed at St. Petersberg, a Russian city, in 1787 C.E. Similarly, another transcription was printed in Qāzān, and in 1828 C.E. the Qurān was printed by lithography on stone slabs in the Iranian city of Tehran. Thereafter, printed copies of the Qurān became common throughout the world.[266]

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266. For a detailed history of printing of the Qurān see "Tarīkh-ul-Qurān" al Kurdī, p186 and 'ulūm ul Qurān by Dr. Ṣubḥī Ṣaleh, Urdu translation by Ghulam Aḥmad Ḥariri p142.

## RECITATIONS AND THEIR COMPILATION

It has been mentioned in the discussion of "Seven Letters" that, in order to facilitate recitation, Allah, the Exalted, revealed the Quran in several versions of recitation. With this difference in recitation no change occurs in the overall meanings of the verses, but modes of reading and pronunciation differ and this has resulted in facility for a large number of people.

The Muslim *Ummah* throughout guarded these recitations also and valuable services have been rendered by Muslims in this connection. Even a short description of these admirable efforts is not possible here. However, a few hints are necessary.

We have already stated that the Quran depended for its dissemination primarily on memory and narration rather than on transcription. Further, it has been stated that the 'Uthmani transcriptions were kept free of dots and diacritical marks so that all the established recitals could be incorporated in them. So, when Sayyidina 'Uthman ﷺ sent these transcriptions to different parts of the Islamic world, he also sent with them such recitors who could teach correct recitation to people. When these *Qaris* (recitors) reached their different destinations they taught the Quran according to their own version, and different recitals spread among the people. Many devoted Muslims made it a mission of their lives to learn the different recitals and teach them to others. And in this way was founded the "Science of Recitals" and people seeking perfection in this branch of knoweledge flocked from every region to the "Imams of Qira'at" (Leading men in Recitals). Some of them learnt just one recital, some two, some three, some seven and even more. In this connection there was one fundamental rule which was universally recognised by the *Ummah* and acted upon everywhere. This

stipulated that only such "Recital" will be accepted as Qurānic as fulfilled three conditions:

1. There should be room for it in the '*Uthmānī* transcriptions.
2. It conformed to the rules of Arabic grammar.
3. It should be authentically proved to be from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and commonly known to the "Imāms of Recitals".

Any recital falling short of even one condition was not accepted as "Qurān". In this way a large number of uninterrupted recitals kept on being transmitted from generation to generation. It also happened, that for the sake of convenience, one Imām adopted one or a few recitals and started teaching them exculusively and that particular recital was named after that particular Imām. Thereafter, scholars started writing books bringing these recitals together, Thus, Imām Abu 'Ubayd Qāsim bin Sallām, Imām Abu Hatim Sijistāni, Qadi Isma'īl and Imām Abu Ja'far Tabarī compiled books on this art in which more than twenty Recitals were collected. Then 'Allāmah Abu Bakr Aḥmad bin Mūsa bin 'Abbās bin Mujāhid (Died 324 AH) published a book in which recitals from only seven recitors were collected. This publication became so immensely popular that, compared to other recitals, these seven recitals acquired much greater popularity, so much so that some people came to believe that only these recitals are correct and uninterrupted, and the other ones are either incorrect or they are interrupted in their transmission. The fact is that Ibn Mujāhid's collection of these seven recitals was only accidental and he never intended to say that recitals other than these were incorrect and unacceptable. Another misunderstanding that was created by this work of Ibn Mujāhid was that some people began to think that it were these seven recitals that were actually meant by the

"Seven Letters" whereas proper explanation of the "Seven Letters" is that which has been discussed in detail in the preceding pages.

However, the seven recitors (Qāris) who became most famous as a result of Ibn Mujāhid's work are the following:

1. 'Abdullah bin Kathīr Al-Dāri (died 120 AH). He had the opportunity to have seen the Companions Sayyidina Anas bin Mālik, 'Abdullah bin Zubayr and Abu Ayyūb Anṣāri, and his recital gained greater popularity in Makkah. Among the reporters of his recital Bazzi and Qunbul were more well-known.
2. Nāf'i bin 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Abi Nu'aim (died 169 AH). He had his lessons from seventy such followers of the Companions who were directly the pupils of Sayyidina Ubayy bin Ka'ab, 'Abdullah bin Abbās and Abu Hurayrah ﷺ. His recital was more popular in Madinah and Abu Mūsa Qalūn (died 220 AH) and Abu Sa'īd Warsh (died-197 AH), were more popular among his promoters.
3. 'Abdullah Yaḥṣubi popularly known as Ibn 'Āmir (died 118 AH). He had seen the Compnaions Sayyidina Nu'man bin Bashir and Sayyidina Wāthilah Bin Asq'a رضی الله تعالى عنهما and learnt the art of Qir'at (Recital) from Sayyidina Mughīrah bin Shahāb Makhzūmi who was a pupil of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ. His recital was mostly prevalent in Syria, and Hishām and Dhakwān were more popular among the reporters of his recital.
4. Abu 'Amr Zabbān ibn ul-'Ala bin 'Āmmār (Died 154 AH). He has quoted Mujāhid and Sa'īd bin Jubayr to have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās and Ubayy bin Ka'ab, and his recital became very popular in Basrah. Famous among the reporters of his recital are Abu 'Umar al-Dawri (Died 246 AH) and Abu Shu'ayb Susi (Died 261 AH).
5. Ḥamzah bin Ḥabīb Al-Zayyat Mawla 'Akramah bin

Rabi Al-Ta'imī (Died 188 AH). He was a student of Sulayman A'amash who was a pupil of Yaḥya bin Wathāb who was the student of Zirr bin Hubaysh who had been benefited by Sayyidina 'Uthmān, 'Ali and Sayyidina Ibn Mas'ūd. Of his reporters Khalaf bin Hishām (Died 188 AH) and Khallād bin Khālid (Died 220 AH) were more popular.

6. 'Āṣim bin Abi-an-Najūd al-Asadī (Died 127 AH). He was a pupil of Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud through Zirr ibn Hubaysh and of Sayyidina 'Ali through Abu 'Abdur Raḥmān Salmī. Of the reporters of his recital Shu'bah bin 'Ayyāsh (Died 193 AH) and Ḥafṣ bin Sulaymān (Died 180 AH) were more popular. Nowadays the recital is made according to the report of the latter.
7. Abul Ḥasan Ali bin Ḥamzah Al-Kisāī Al-Naḥvī (Died 189 AH). Famous among his reporters are Abul Ḥārith Marūzi (Died 240 AH) and Abu 'Umar ul-Dādri (who has also reported the recital of Abu 'Amr.)

The recitals of the last three became prevalent mostly in Kūfah.

As has already been stated there are several other recitals, apart from the above Seven, which are correct and uninterrupted. So when the misconception grew that the correct recitals are limited to these seven, several scholars (namely 'Allamah Shedhāi and Abu Bakr bin Mehrān ) collected ten instead of seven recitals in a book and the phrase 'Ten Recitals' became popular.[267]

The ten recitals comprised three recitals in addition to the above seven. The additional three are as under:

1) Ya'qūb bin Is'hāq Al-Khidramī (Died 225). He learnt from Salām bin Sulaymān Al-Ṭawīl who learnt from 'Āṣim and Abu 'Amr His recitals gained popularity in Baṣrah.

267. An-Nashr fil-Qirāt -al-'Ashr. v1, p34.

2) Khalaf bin Hishām (died 205 AH)'. He had learnt from Salīm bin 'Isa bin Ḥamzah bin Ḥabīb Zayyāt, Hence, he also reported the recitation of Hamzah. His recitation was prevalent in Kūfah.
3) Abu Ja'far Yazīd ibn al-Qa'qā' (died 130 AH). He had learnt from Sayyidina 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah and Ubayy bin K'ab ﷺ and his recital was mostly recognised in Madinah.

Some people however, added another four recitors to the above ten, to make the total to fourteen. These four were

1) Ḥasan Baṣri (Died 110 AH). He was a renowned Tābi'ee and his recital was centered at Baṣrah.
2) Muḥammad bin Abdur Raḥmān Ibn Muḥaysan (D.123 AH). He was a student of Mujāhid and teacher of Abu 'Amr'. His centre was in Makkah.
3) Yaḥya bin Mubārak Yazīdi (died 202 AH). He lived in Baṣrah and learnt from Abu 'Amr and Ḥamzah.
4) Abul Farj Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Shambūzi (Died 388 AH). He lived in Baghdād and his teacher was Ibn Shambūz. He was thus called Shambūzi.

Some authors have mentioned the name of Sulayman A'mash in place of Shamūzi. Of the fourteen, the first ten are regarded as un-interrupted while the others are uncommon.[268]

It seems appropriate to point to the wrong interpretation given to the action of 'Allāmah Ibn Mujāhid by the well-known orientalist of our time Montgomery Watt in pursuance of his teacher, Bell. He has written that by collecting seven recitals Ibn Mujāhid has on the one hand indicated that these "Seven Recitals" correspond to the "Seven Letters", and on the other he claimed that no other recital was reliable. Hence, other scholars also adopted this view and it was on this basis that they compelled Ibn

268. Manāhil ul-'Irfān v.1, p.460. Ref: Munjidul-Muqri'īn, Ibn Jazarī v1, p46.

Miqsam and Ibn Shambūdh to retract from their views because they considered other recitals equally reliable.[269]

As it is, none of the facts in the above mentioned statement of Watt is correct. We have just explained that several scholars and recitors of that time had writen down several variations of recitals in a single book. None of them had meant that other recitals were not reliable. Ibn Mujāhid himself has not hinted that his collection of seven recitals meant "Seven Letters" nor has he claimed that correct recitals are confined to these seven. Other scholars also never inferred from his work that he intended to label the other recitals as unreliable. On the contrary, all the other research scholars in this subject have constatnly refuted this idea. The most authentic scholar of the Science of *Qira'at* (Recitals), 'Allāma Ibn-ul-Jazari (known with the title of Muḥaqiq and Research Scholar), strongly refuted this idea. At one place he writes.

"We have made this discussion lengthy because we have been informed that some ignorant people consider only these seven recitals as correct, and say that by the phrase Seven Letters in the *Ḥadith* is meant these seven recitals.... That is why many of the earlier scholars have criticised Ibn Mujāhid that instead of collecting seven recitals, he should have mentioned more or less than seven recitals or he ought to have made his purport clear so that ignorant people had not suffered from this misunderstanding."[270]

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and 'Allamah Suyūṭi have quoted several Imāms of Recitals wherein it has been clarified that Ibn Mujāhid had collected "Seven Letters" only in reliance to "Seven Transcriptions", otherwise he never meant to

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269. M.W. Watt. Bells Introduction to the Qurān (Islamic Surveys Series 8) Edinburgh 1970 pp48, 49, W.M. Bell.)
270. An-Nashr-fil-Qiraāti l-'Ashr v1, pp35, 36.

class the other recitals as incorrect or unreliable.[271]

As for the story of Ibn Miqsam and Ibn Shambūz, the scholars had not criticised them why they considered recitals other than these seven as correct. But the reason was, that three conditions must be fulfilled before calling a recital as correct (a) that it must be compatible with the 'Uthmān Transcription, (b) that it must correspond to the rules of Arabic grammar (c),that its uninterrupted transmission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ must be authentically proved, and that it be popularly known to the Imāms of Qir'at. Any recital that fulfills these conditions shall be acceptable whether it is included in the Seven recitals or not, and if even a single condition is not met, it will be not reliable even though it may be included in these seven recitals. But Ibn Miqsam and Ibn Shambūz[272] had violated this established rule. Ibn Miqsam held that only the first two conditions were sufficient for the "Recital" to be correct. A recital would therefore be acceptable if it is in accordance with the 'Uthmāni Transcription and happens to correspond to Arabic grammar, even if it is lacking in a proper line of transmission. As against this, Ibn Shambūz stated that a "Recital" reported through uninterrupted authentic narrations shall be acceptable even if it does not conform to the "*Uthmāni script*". On this basis all the scholars refuted them collectively and ultimately both of them came round to the opinion of the majority.[273]

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271. Fatḥ-ul-Bārī v9, pp25-27, Al-Itqān v1, pp82, 83.
272. Their full names: Abu Bakr Muḥammad bin Al-Ḥasan bin Yāqūb and Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Ayyūb.
273. An Nashr fil Qirāat al 'Ashr v1, pp17-35. Al-Itqān v1, p19. Tārīkh Baghdād, Khaṭīb, v1, p280. Wafyāt Al A'yān, Ibn Khalkān v1, p49, printedt in Egypt .

**CHAPTER-6**

# DOUBTS ABOUT PRESERVATION OF THE QURĀN AND THEIR ANSWERS

The Holy Qurān has stated:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ○

Surely We have revealed the Admonition (the Qurān), and surely We are its Guardian. (Al-Hijr, 15:9)

Through this revelation it has been prophesised that the Qurān will exist in its original form till the Last Day, and no power on earth will succeed in destroying it or causing any alteration and adulteration in it. It has been made apparent in the preceding pages how Almighty Allah has made this prophesy practically true and how the Qurān has been safeguarded in every age. Hence, today it can be said with full confidence and without any fear of contradiction that we have the Qurān in exactly the same form as it was taught by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and even a single dot or stroke could not be changed.

This is not only the faith of Muslims but unbiased non-Muslims have also accepted this fact and could not dare to deny it. But when one's vision is blurred by malice and prejudice even a crystal glass would appear murky to him. And this is the reason that some non-Muslim writers have raised suspicions and objections about the preservation of the Holy Qurān. We would like here to briefly discuss the truth about these suspicions.

## FIRST OBJECTION:

## SOME VERSES OF EARLY DAYS COULD NOT BE PRESERVED

The well-known Orientalist F. Buhl has claimed that Qurānic verses were not being written in the early days of their revelation, and their preservation depended entirely on the memory of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions. Hence it is quite likely that the verses reveald during the period may not have been preserved. In support of his claim Buhl[274] has presented two verses of the Holy Qurān:

سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰى ۞ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللّٰهُ

1: We shall make you (O Prophet) recite (our revelations) so that you shall not forget, except what Allah wills.
(Al-'Alā, 68:6)

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ اٰيَةٍ اَوْ نُنْسِهَا نَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا اَوْ مِثْلِهَا

2: Whatever revelation We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or similar to it.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:106)

But anybody even with a rudimentary understanding of the Qurān and its exegesis can see the absurdity of this objection because these two verses refer only to the abrogated verses of the Qurān.

The background of revelation of the first verse is that in the beginning whenever Jibril ؑ used to bring some verses the Prophet ﷺ used to hurriedly repeat them for fear of forgetting them and this caused him a great deal of strain. This verse comforted him by assuring him that he should not put himself to hardship of memorising the revelations because Allah has taken the responsibility of preservation of

274: F. Buhl-Encyclopaedia of Islam v3, pp1067, Koran.

the Qurān upon Himself, hence he would not forget them. But this could have been taken amiss due to the fact that some verses of the Qurān were forgotten later on due to their abrogation. This has been explained by saying إلا ماشاء الله (except that which Allah Wills). This only means that only that verse would be forgotten that was abrogated and not otherwise. Similarly, the other verse only denotes that due to their abrogation some verses would be forgotten by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions.[275]

Hence, the most the two verses prove is that when Allah abrogated some verses, He not only ordered their erasure from the transcriptions but simultaneously caused their obliteration from the memories of the people. As far as the non-abrogated verses are concerned, it has been categorically affirmed about them that they will never be forgotten by the Prophet ﷺ. How does it follow from this there is a possibility of forgetting the un-abbrogated verses also?

The argument on the basis of these verses that the Qurān was not being recorded in the early days of Islam is utterly baseless and absurd. We have already mentioned that it is authentically proved that the Qurān existed in written form with the Companions before the acceptance of Islam by 'Umar ﷺ.

.Hence the mention of only "forgetfulness" in the first verse does not mean that the Qurān did not exist in written form, but its actual reason is that this verse deals with the topic of "forgetfulness". Any mention of erasure of the written verses at this point would have been out of the way and out of context. That is why the second verse deals with both abrogation ('erasure of written sentences')and forgetfulness because in this verse the subject of discussion is abrogation. The literal meaning of abrogation is erasure, or blotting out, hence this verse clearly denotes that the

275: Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī v20, p18.

Qurān was present in written form and some of its verses were erased due to their abrogation. It is surprising that the verse which is actually affirming the Qurān's existence in written form is being presented by Buhl to negate it.

## SECOND OBJECTION:

## THE PROPHET HAD ONCE FORGOTTEN A VERSE

Orientalist D.S. Margoliouth has tried to cast doubts about the preservation of the Qurān on the basis of a tradition reported by Bukhāri and Muslim.[276] It has been reported by Sayyidah 'Aishah رضی الله تعالی عنها that the Hoy Prophet ﷺ once heard one of his Companions reciting the Qurān, and siad:

رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ، لَقَدْ اَذْكَرَنِیْ اٰيَةً كُنْتُ اَنْسِيْتُهَا

صحیح بخاری، کتاب فضائل القرآن، ص ۷۵۳، ج ۲، و صحیح مسلم، کتاب فضائل القرآن، ص ۲۶۷، ج ۱۔

> Allah's mercy be on him, he made me remember a verse that I had forgotten.[277]

By quoting this narration Margoliouth intends to deduce that if the Prophet ﷺ can forget one verse at any time, it may possibly happen with other verses as well. Probably he also wants to indicate that the Qurān did not exist in writing otherwise the Prophet ﷺ would not have forgotten that verse. But this objection is so absurd and baseless that even a man with ordinary intelligence will not accept it. Sometimes it does happen that man does remember something yet due to a prolonged dissociation with it he does not have it fresh in his memory but as

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276: Margoliouth, D.S. Encydclopaedia of Religion and Ethics p543.

277: Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī Faḍail al Qurān v2, p.753 & Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim v1, p267.

soon as someone mentions it, it becomes fresh in memory again. Actually this is not forgetfulness but only a temporary dissociation of thought. The same happened with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Terming it forgetfulness on the basis of such an incident is the height of travesty which is nothing but sheer bigotry. On the contrary had Mr. Margoliouth viewed it with insight and justice he would have realised that this incident actually proves that Allah has safeguarded the Qurān in such an extraordinary manner that no possibility exists for any part of it to become lost. The incident simply proves the reality that every single verse of the Qurān was made to be memorised by so many people that if ever a verse did not remain fresh in the memory of the Prophet ﷺ for the time being there was no possibility of its getting lost.

The objection that this incident denotes that the Qurān, at that time, did not exist in written form is even more unfounded and ridiculous: We have already pointed out that the only thing this incident says is that a verse was revived in the memory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ by its recitation by a Companion. It does not prove that the Qurān was not found in written form. Does Mr. Margoliouth think that a thing once written can never become obscure from a person's mind for a short while? Further, the whole world knows that the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not know reading or writing. So, there was no connection between his remembrance of the Qurān and its transcription, hence inference that the Qurān did not exist in written form can be drawn from this incident only by a person who has closed, the doors of justice and wisdom on himself.

## THIRD OBJECTION:

## REFERENCE OF SURAH AL-AN'ĀM IN SURAH AN-NISA'

Margoliouth has advanced another very strange argument about his contention that the Qurān was not written. He points out that the Qurān states in *Surah An-Nisa'*:

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ أٰيَاتِ اللّٰهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتّٰى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ــــــ ○

> And (O Believers!) He has indeed (already) revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being disbelieved in and mocked at, sit not with them (who do this) until they indulge in a discourse other than that.... (An-Nisa, 4:140)

This verse is Madinian and the Makkan verse referred to in it is as under:

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي أٰيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتّٰى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ــــــ ○

> (O Prophet) when you see those who meddle with our revelations, you withdraw from them till they meddle with some other discourse. (Al-An'am, 6:68)

The first verse refers to the second verse but their wordings are different. Margoliouth infers from this that the Qurān did not exist in written form, because if it were written down, the first verse must have used the very same words as the second verse. The difference in the wordings

means that the words of the second verse were not preserved when the first verse was revealed.[278]

This argument of Margoliouth is so palpalbly unsound that one feels abashed even to refute it. The question here arises, "If the words of the above mentioned verse of *Surah Al-An'ām* were not preserved at the time of revelation of *Surah An-Nisa'* how were they written in the Qurān later on?" If the original words of *Surah Al-An'ām* were not preserved, logically the later scribes would have written there exactly the same words as in *Surah An-Nisa'*. The difference in words in fact denotes that the words of both the verses were fully preserved and unchanged, and there was no element of conjecture or guess. If the transcription of the Qurān had been guess-work there should have been no difference in the wordings of these two verses.

The fact is that in every language there are two ways of making reference to a preceding subject. Sometimes the exact words of the previous narration are repeated, which form of speech is known in English as Direct Narration; while sometimes the same words are not repeated but the basic meanings are described in different words, known as Indirect Narration. Of these, the former form is not commonly adopted, generally it is the latter form that is resorted to in literary phraseology. This latter form is the one adopted in *Surah An-Nīsa'*. Another reason for this is that many a time every *Surah* of the Qurān has a different style in relation to the formation of its sentences. Hence if a sentence from another *Surah* is added in between its own phrases the sequence of the verse would break and the flow of these sentences would not be maintained. Anybody having the slightest literary taste can see that reproduction of the exact words of the *Surah Al-An'ām* in the verse of

278: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics v10, p542.

*Surah An-Nisa'* would break the sequence and flow of the phrase. Further, it should be noted that the entire *Surah Al-An'ām* about which Margoliouth says that it was not written, was revealed in one instance and it contains the following verse also:[279]

وَهَٰذَا كِتَابٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ

> And this (Qurān) is the blessed Book which We have revealed confirming that which was (revealed) before it.
>
> (Al-An'ām, 6:92)

In the verse the word 'Book' has been used for the Qurān. If the Qurān was not being written uptil the revelation of *Surah Al-An'ām* it could not be called a "Book" which word implies only to written materials. In short, this objection of Margoliouth, too, turns out to be unfounded, absurd and a product of animus and prejudice.

## FOURTH OBJECTION:

## SLANDER OF MARGOLIOUTH AGAINST IMĀM BUKHĀRI

Raising his fourth objection on the preservation of the Qurān Margoliouth says that Bukhari has stated that the sentence:

إِلَّا أَنْ تَصِلُوا مَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ مِنَ الْقَرَابَةِ

> (Except that you respect the relation that exists between me and you).

was a divine revelation through *Wahy*, but the commentators say that this sentence does not exist in the Qurān. Hence they consider this sentence as an explanatory note to the Qurānic verse 23 of *Surah Ash-Shūrā*, 42, that is:

279: Tafseer Ibn Kathīr v1, p122.

إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبَىٰ

.....but (I seek to guide you) in respect of love of kinship....[280]

But we wish to state with full sense of responsibility that with these words an Orientalist of the reputation of Margoliouth has made such a slanderous statement which cannot be termed as anything other than a dishonest and prejudiced bias or at the least a lamentable ignorance. With this, Mr.Margoliouth has tried to create an impression that Imām Bukhāri considered a sentence as part of the Qurān which is not found in the Qurān at present. Any unbiased and honest person may turn the pages of *Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhāri* and find that he has copied the verse in exactly the same words as they exist in the Qurān and the sentence (الا ان ..................تصلوا) has been written as its explanation. The complete text of Imām Bukhāri's statement is as under:

باب قوله الا المودة فى القربى حدثنا محمد بن بشّار .... عن ابن عباسؓ انه سئل عن قوله الا المودة فى القربى فقال سعيد بن جبيرؒ قربى ال محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال ابن عباسؓ عجلت، ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم لم يكن بطن من قريش الا كان له قرابة فقال الا ان تصلوا ما بينى و بينكم من القرابة۔

(صحيح بخارى، كتاب التفسير، سورة حم عسق، ص ۷۱۳، ج ۲، طبع كراچى و فتح البارى، ص ۴۵۷، ج ۸ و عمدة القارى، ص ۱۵۷، ج ۱۹)

CHAPTER, The statement of Allah "Except in respect of love of kinship (42:23) Narrator Muḥammad bin Bashshār..... from Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that he was asked (regarding) "but (I seek to guide you) in respect of love

280. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, v1, p543.

of kinship" (42:23). Sa'īd bin Jubayr said: "It means here (to show what is due for) the relatives of Muḥammad ﷺ." On that Ibn 'Abbās said: You have hurried in giving the answer! There was no branch of the tribe of Quraysh but the Prophet had relatives therein. The Prophet ﷺ said "I do not want anything from (you) except to be kind to me from my kinship with you."[281]

It is quite clear now that under the heading of the verse Imām Bukhāri has written exactly the same sentence of the verse that occurs in the Qurān. Then as an explanation to it Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ was asked to comment on the verse الا المودة فی القربی and he said الا ان تصلوا ما بینی و بینکم من القرابة but Mr.Margoliouth has the effrontery to state that Imām Bukhāri believes this sentence as part of Qurānic revelation. One can easily understand how deep and abiding is the prejudice which animates these so called pioneers of research and truth due to their prejudice against the Qurān, and how tightly the malice and grudge against Islam has trapped them.

فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease. (Al-Baqarah, 2:10)

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281: Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī, Kitab Tafseer, *surah Hāmeem 'Ayn, Sīn, Qāf*. v2, p713 printed at Karachi Fatḥ ul Bārī v8, p457, 'Um-datul Qārī v19 p157.

## FIFTH OBJECTION:

## SOME VERSES WERE LOST BY SAYYIDAH 'AISHAH رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا

The fifth objection raised by Margoliouth is that according to a narration of Musnad Aḥmad some verses were lost[282] by Sayyidah 'Ayshah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا . The narration referred to by Margoliouth is as under,

عن عائشة زوج النبی صلی اللہ علیه وسلم قالت لقد انزلت اية الرجم ورضعات الكبير عشراً فكانت فی ورقة تحت سرير فی بيتی فلما اشتكی رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیه و سلم تشا غلنا بأمره و دخلت دويبة لنا فا كلتها۔

Sayyida 'Aishah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا stated that verses about stoning and ten 'Rid'āt of older people were revealed. These verses were written on a paper that was kept under the bed. When the Prophet ﷺ suffered from the agony of death we got busy in looking after him. Our pet animal came and ate that paper.[283]

The fact is that the verses mentioned in this narration were the ones that were abrogated for recital. Sayyidah 'Aishah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا herself believes on the abrogation of those verses. If she had kept them written in a paper it does not mean anything other than the preservation of a relic. She, however, remembered them and if she knew them to be a part of the Qurān she would have got them transcribed in the copies of the Qurān, but she never made any attempt all her life. It is clear that she herself considered them no more than an academic momento.

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282: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics v10, p543.

283: Musnad Aḥmad; Zaw'id, Masnadāt 'Aishah v6, p269. Beirut.

This incident does not cause any reproach to the preservation of the Qurān.

## SIXTH OBJECTION:

## NUMBER OF MEMORISERS OF THE QUR'ĀN IN THE DAYS OF THE PROPHET

Some people have doubted the preservation of the Qurān on the basis of a tradition of Sayyidina Qatādah ﷺ. This tradition is quoted by Bukhāri in the following words.

سألت انس بن مالك رضى الله تعالٰى عنه مَن جمع القرآن علٰى
عهد النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم، قال اربعة كلهم من الانصار،
ابى بن كعبؓ و معاذ بن جبلؓ و زيد بن ثابتؓ و ابو زيدؓ۔

"I asked Sayyidina Anas bin Mālik as to who collected the Qurān in the days of the Prophet ﷺ. He said, Four persons, all from among the Ansars, Ubayy bin Ka'b, Mu'az bin Jabal, Zayd bin Thābit and Abu Zayd."

On the basis of this *Ḥadith* some people think that in the days of the Prophet ﷺ there were only four persons who had memorised the Qurān by heart. In fact this is not true. We have already given the names of those who had memorised the Qurān during the days of the Prophet ﷺ. Hence the narration of Sayyidina Anas bin Mālik certainly does not mean that there were no more than these four memorisers of the Qurān in the entire group of the Companions. But in the tradition under reference the phrase "who collected the Qurān" has been used, and the correct interpretation of this is "Who wrote the Qurān"? Sayyidina Anas ﷺ in fact meant that these were the four persons who had with them the complete manuscript of the Qurān during the very days of the

Prophet ﷺ.

Further, Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar رحمة الله عليه has written the full sotry of the narration of Sayyidina Anas ؓ with reference to a narration from Ṭabarī as follows "Once the tribes of Aws and Khazrāj each claimed supremacy over the other and boasted feats of their members."

The people of Aws enumerated the names of their tribesmen who had gained a special status in Islam. In reply to this the people of Khazrāj (including Sayyidina Anas) said that there were four persons in their tribe who had collected the entire Qurān. Hence his narration could also mean that there were only these four persons in both the tribes who had collected the Qurān.[284]

## SEVENTH OBJECTION:

## 'ABDULLAH BIN MAS'ŪD AND MU'AWWADHATAYN

## (THE LAST TWO SURĀHS)

Some people make the most of the narration of Musnad Ahmad which states that Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd did not consider the last two *Surahs* of the Qurān (*Al-Falaq and An-Nās*) as part of the Qurān.[285]

This is a false allegation. In fact 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, like the entire *Ummah* considered these two *Surahs* as part of the Qurān, and the traditions which are against it are not correct. It is proved from the fact that the uninterrupted recitals from him contain these *Surahs*. Of the ten recitals the one from 'Āsim is quoted by Abu Abdur Raḥmān Sulmī, Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh and Abu Amr-al-Shaybāni, and all of them have reported it from Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.[286] Similarly, the recital

284: For details see Fatḥ-ul-Bāri v9, pp41,42.
285: Watt: W. Montgomery; Bell's Introduction to the Qurān p46.
286: An-Nashr fil Qir'āt al 'Ashr, Ibn ul Jazarī. v1, p156.

of Hamzah is quoted by 'Alqamah, Aswad, Ibn Wahb, Masrūq, 'Āṣim bin Ḍamrah and Hārith and all of them have reported it from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd.[287] Further, the recitals of Kisaī and Khalaf are also traced back to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd because Kisāi learnt it from Hamzah, and Khalaf was a student of his student.

Since there is a consensus on the fact that all the reports of "The ten recitals" are the most convincing and authentic reports and are being transmitted uninterruptedly from generation to generation[288] hence, isolated report against these must be rejected and cannot be accepted.

It is on this basis that most scholars of *Hadith* and researchers have termed as weak, invented or at least unacceptable reports that attribute the false belief towards 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. These scholars include 'Allāmah Nawawī, 'Allāmah Ibn Hazm, Imām Rāzi, Qaḍi Abu Bakr bin 'Arabī, 'Allāmah Baḥr-ul-'Ulūm, and of the latest era, the renowned research scholar 'Allamah Zāhid Kautharī (رحمهم الله).[289]

One may think that since Hāfiẓ Ibn ________ Ḥajar and 'Allāmah Nuruddīn Haythmi (رحمهم الله) have asserted that all the narrators of these reports were reliable people,[290] how can these reports be termed as incorrect? But the people who have a knowledge of the science of *Ḥadith* know it well that reliability of the narrators alone is not sufficient for a tradition to be correct, but it is also necessary that it should have no element of flaw and

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287: Ibid p166.

288: Faiḍ ul-Bārī v1, p262.

289: See in sequential order Al-Itqān v2, p.81, Al-Muḥallā, Ibn Ḥazm v1, p13, Fawātiḥ ur Raḥmūt, Sherah Muslimuth Thubut by Baḥrul 'Ulūm v2, p12, Maqālāt ul Kawtharī, p16, My own Article in Al-Balāgh, Sh'abān 1393, Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Muwadhatayn.

290: Fatḥ al Bārī v8, p3, Majmu'az Zawāid, Haythmī v7, p149.

irregularity in it. All scholars of *Ḥadith* have defined "Correct Tradition" as devoid of any defect or irregularity and if a tradition contains these elements, it would not be regarded as correct despite the reliability of its narrators. In his preface Ḥāfiẓ Ibn-us-Sallāh writes as under.

"Hence *Ḥadith* Mu'allal (Motivated Tradition) is that wherein some defect may be suspected even though apparently it may seem to be correct. And this defect may be found even in its precedent wherein also the narrators are reliable men and in which all the conditions of authenticity seem to be present. The defect is comprehended by those having deep insight in the science of *Ḥadith* through several means e.g. by finding the narrator as an isolated one, or sometimes due to his opposition to some other narrator coupled with some other indications."[291]

Similarly, there is a kind of Tradition called "Shāz" (Rare). In it the narrators are reliable but because they oppose other narrators more reliable than themselves their report is not accepted. Hence, 'Allāmah Nawawī and Ibn Ḥazm regard as unacceptable those *Ḥadīth* that allege that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd did not consider the last *Surāhs* as part of the Qurān although their narrators are reliable men. They have the following reasons for their stand:

1: These reports are defective because they are against such recitals of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd as have been reported uninterruptedly.
2: The narration of Musnad Aḥmad that describes the saying of Ibn Mas'ūd... انهما ليستا من كتاب الله (These two are not part of the Book of Allah) is reported only by 'Abdur Rahmān bin Yazīd Nakh'ī. Nobody else has reported this sentence from him as such.[292] Also it is

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291: Fatḥ-ul-Mulhim v1, p54.
292: Majma' Zaw id, Haythmī v7, p149. and Fatḥ ur Rabbāni v18, pp351-352.

not an uninterrupted narration. hence it is classed as "Rare". According to the principles established by Scholars of *Ḥadith* "Rare reports" are not acceptable.

3: Even if these reports are taken as correct they shall remain "Isolated News". and the *Ummah* has consensus that any Isolated news that does not conform to the rule of continuity is unacceptable. The recitals of Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ are proved through uninterrupted narrations and are doubtless authentic. Hence these isolated news against those narrations are unacceptable.

The question now remains that if these narrations are not correct then why the reliable narrators reported such a baseless thing? The answer to this question is that although he believed them to be part of the Qurān, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ may not have written them in his manuscript for some reason. And reporter of this fact may have deduced from it that Ibn Mas'ūd did not consider them to be Qurānic revelations although it was a fact that he had not written them down in spite of believing them to be part of Qurān. There could be many reasons for not writing them in his manuscript. For example, 'Allāmah Zahid Kawthrī has stated that he had not written them down because there was no fear of their being forgotten. Every Muslim remembers them by heart.[293]

This argument is supported by the fact that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ did not even write down the *Surah Al-Fatiḥa* in his manuscript. Imām Abu Bakr Al-Ambarī has reported that Ibn 'Abbās was asked about it and he replied that if he had to write *Surah Al-Fatiḥa* he would have written it with every *Surah*. Imām Abu Bakr says that this meant that since the *Surah* is recited with every

293: Maqālāt ul-Kawthari, p16.

*Surah* during *Salah* he had omitted it and relied on the memory of Muslims.[294]

Anyhow, there can be several explanations why 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had not written *surah, Al-Fatiḥa* and these two *Surahs* in his manuscript. It cannot be concluded from it that he did not consider them to be part of the Qurān, while the entire Qurān has been reported uninterruptedly from him including these *Surahs*.

## EIGHTH OBJECTION:

## COLLECTION OF THE QURĀN DURING THE TIME OF SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR ﷺ

We have already mentioned in detail about the accomplishment of the collection of the Holy Qurān during the time of Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ Some Orientalists have outright refused to accept this fact. They maintain that no attempt was officially made to collect and compile the Qurān at that time and it was only Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ who first performed this task. They further claim that the transcription of Sayyida Ḥafṣah (رضى الله عنها) which 'Uthmān ﷺ used was her personal copy and not the officially compiled Qurān. To support this claim they have raised certain objections to the tradition quoted by Bukhāri that has been reported from Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ and which has described the incident of collection and compilation of the Qurān at the time of Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq.[295] All these objections have been summerised by Montgomery Watt.[296] It is unnecessary to mention all those objections in these pages and give an answer to them because most of them are such that anybody with

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294: Tafsīr Al-Qurtabī v1, pp114, 115.

295: This report has been described in the preceding pages.

296: Watt:Bell's Introduction to the Qurān 40, 42. Edingburgh 1970.

common sense can easily answer them. However, some important objections are answered below.

One of their objections is raised on a *Ḥadith* in Bukhāri that Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ was motivated to write down the Qurān on observing that many martyrs the Battle of Yamamah were the Ḥuffāẓ (those who had memorised the Qurān). They state that the number of Ḥuffāẓ martyred in this battle was negligible because most of the martyrs were recently converted Muslims. This objection is not only unfounded but also absurd. It was first raised by Fredrich Schwally and subsequently other Orientalists blindly followed him,[297] and none of them bothered to have gone through the list of martyrs and see how far this objection is true? The fact is that the number of partcipants in the battle of Yamamah was there hundred and sixty Muhājirīn (Immigrants) and Anṣars (Helpers) of Madinah and three hundered Muhājirīn (Immigrants) from other parts around Madinah.[298] Evidently the names of all the 660 persons could not be preserved. However, fifty eight names have been mentioned by Ibn Kathīr.[299]

Of the these 58 persons one was Sālim Mawlā Abi Ḥuzayfah ﷺ who held the most distinguished position among the Companions by virture of being a Ḥāfiẓ and Qāri (Recitor). He was one of the four Companions who were specifically named by the Prophet ﷺ from whom the Qurān may be learnt. He was the Imām (that is, he used to lead the *Salah*) at the mosque of Qubā before the Hijrah and 'Umar ﷺ also used to offer *Salah* behind him. He often used to lead the *Salah* during journeys because he was regarded as the greatest scholar of the Qurān.[300]

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297: Watt: Bell's Introduction to the Qurān. p192.
298: Tarīkh-al-Ṭabarī v2, p516.
299: Al-bidāyah wan-Nihāyah v6, p340.
300: Al-Istī'yāb, Ibn 'Abdul Barr, v2, pp28,29.

The other eminent person was Abu Ḥuzayfah ﷺ and he was the forty-fourth Muslim in history of Islam.[301] His eminent place regarding the knowledge of Qurān can well be imagined from his close connection with Sayyidina Sālim apart from his long association with the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The third eminent person was Zayd bin Khaṭṭāb ﷺ, the elder brother of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ who had accepted Islam in its earliest days. Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ used to say about him that every gust of wind brought the memory of Zayd to him.[302]

The fourth of them was Sayyidina Thābit bin Qays bin Shammās ﷺ who was one of the scribes of Qurānic revelations[303] and his special relation to the Qurān is well-known.

Another person was 'Abbād bin Bishar ﷺ who was present in the battle of Badr. Sayyida 'Āyshah رضی الله تعالی عنها has stated that three Anṣār Companions were superior to other Companions by virtue of their knowledge and wisdom, and one of them was 'Abbād bin Bishār.[304]

Also, Sayyidina Ṭufayl bin 'Amr ad-Dausī ﷺ was martyred in the Battle of Yamāmah. He was a distinguished Companion who had learnt the Qurān from Ubayy bin Ka'b ﷺ. who was known to be the greatest scholar of Qir at.[305] Also included in the list are brother of Zayd bin Thābit, Yazīd bin Thābit,

Uncle of Barā' bin 'Āzib, Qays bin Ḥārith, brother of Sayyidina Mu'āz, 'Āiz bin Mā'iz, brother of Zubayr Sā'ib bin 'Awwām and the son of Sayyidina 'Uthmān bin

301: Al-Iṣābah by Ibn Hajr v4, p43.
302: Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, by Ibn Kathīr v6, p336.
303: Zād-ul-Ma'ād, Ibn Qayyim v1, p30. Mu'īniyah Egypt.
304: Al-Iṣābah v2, p255 and Al Ist'iyāb 'Alā Hāmish as Saḥāba v2, p444-446
305: Al-Iṣābah, v2, p217.

Maẓ'ūn Sā'id bin 'Uthmān.

In addition to the above named there were 18 from among the immigrants, and about 20 from the Helpers (Anṣār) who had accepted Islam before the battle of Badr. There were another 10 who were present in the battle of Uḥud.[306] This list of the martyrs at Yamāmah includes only names such as could be preserved in the history. How many more Ḥuffāẓ (recitors who had memorised the Qurān) were among the unnamed martyrs is very difficult to estimate. But Fredrick Schwally, George Bell and Montgomery Watt see no recitor among them. And not only that, they want to impress the world of their research by calling them the recent converts and deny the authenticity of the tradition of Bukhāri on the basis of this assumption. This is the height of treachery with the principles of learning and research, and an extremely deceitful technique to undermine justice and honesty. In fact, it was not just in the case of battle of Yamāmah where all the Ḥuffāẓ Companions were martyred but this battle was just one in the long chain of battles that were to ensue, and there was a large number of learned Companions who were keen to sacrifice their lives in battles more fierce than this. If under these conditions, Sayyidina Umar ﷺ got the idea to collect the Qurān how can it be made a basis for rejecting a strongly authentic tradition of Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī?

Another objection raised by Watt on this tradition is that if Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ had prepared an official transciption of the Qurān, it would have served as a precedent (a definite argument) but we do not find any evidence to that effect in the traditions of that time. The absurdity of this objection is also quite evident. That this

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306: Al-kāmil-Al-Jazari v2, p140, and Al-Bidāyah wan Nihāyah, v6, p340.

transcription was a precedent and there can be no greater proof of this than the fact when Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ decided to prepare the copies of the Qurān he sent for the same transcription from Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضی الله تعالی عنها that was prepared by Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ.

Watt has also raised the objeciton that if this was an official transcription then after the death of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ why did it remain in the custody of Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضی الله تعالی عنها instead of his successor Caliph. The answer to this objection is obvious that after the martyrdom of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ there was no successor for sometime and all his belongings, including this transcription, were transferred to his daughter Sayyidah Ḥafṣah رضی الله تعالی عنها. No sensible person would make this a basis for rejecting such an authentic tradition.

## NINTH OBJECTION:

## COMPLETE QURĀN WAS NOT WRITTEN UPTO THE TIME OF SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR'S CALIPHATE

It has been described earlier that whenever any verse was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ he used to send for the scribes and dictate it to them. In this way the entire Qurān had been written down before the death of the Prophet ﷺ but it was not compiled in a book form. Different verses were written on different things. Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ got all of them collected and transcribed into various folios.

Contrary to this, Noldeke and Arthur Jeffery etc. have claimed that the Qurān was not completely written down during the days of the Prophet ﷺ, but only some portions of it were written. They have based their claim on the tradition of Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī that Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ advised for collection of the Qurān after the battle of

Yamāmah and the reason he advanced was that he feared loss of many portions of the Qurān if the Ḥuffāẓ (memorisers) got martyred as they were in that Battle. Arthur Jeffery has written that the cause of fear was the killings of those "Ḥuffāẓ" who had memorised the Qurān. He argues that there was no cause for such a fear if the entire Qurān had already been written during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ.[307]

But it is extremely sad and surprising that like some other Orientalists Arthur Jeffery has also refused to accept the tradition of Bukhārī which denotes that Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ had got prepared an official copy of the Qurān.[308] One wonders in which square to fit this double standard. On the one hand Jeffery considers all such events incorrect and suggests that preservation of the Qurān was officially written during the days of Abu Bakr ﷺ, yet, on the other hand, he has based his argument on the wordings of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ which is a part of the same tradition from Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ. On the one hand, he calls the entire tradition as "fictition" but on the other hand he also quotes the same tradition for proving his claim that Qurān was not written down. Still they have the audacity to claim that justice, fairplay and impartiality of the Orientalists was quite obvious and that it is evident from their books that they want nothing else but to unveil the reality!

Anyway, if the method adopted for collection of the Qurān during the Caliphate of Sayyidina Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq ﷺ, as described in the preceding chapter is kept in view, the argument of Jeffery automatically becomes void. To

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307: 'Arabic Muqaddamah, Kitāb-ul-Maṣāḥif -Abi Daūd Rahmānia Press Egypt 1355 A.H. by Arthur Jeffery p5.

308: Arthur Jeffery: Materials for the History of the Text of the Qurān1937 p6.

remind once again, the method adopted for this purpose was based collecively on memory and manuscripts at the same time. No verse was put to wirting until its being a part of the Qurān was proved by all available means. Such a guarded system could become possible only because apart from the Qurānic verses being secure in writing,a large number of such persons were available who knew them by heart. Such persons were called Ḥuffāẓ (plural of Ḥāfiẓ) and if they had not been available in such a large number the feat of collection of the Qurān could not have been accomplished so scrupulously as it deserved.

In addition to that, an uninterrupted chain of transmission was needed for proof of the Qurān and just one or two copies could not fulfil this requirement. Hence a substantial number of Ḥuffāẓ was inevitable for the collection of the Qurān. That was why Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ feared that if the martyrdom of Ḥuffāẓ continued like that and the collection of the Qurān was delayed, the chain of transmission could break or at least become weak, and it would not be possible to confirm the written verse from the uninterrupted memories of the Companions. Hence, it is quite false to use Sayyidina 'Umar's ﷺ caution to conclude that the Qurān did not exist in written form.

## TENTH OBJECTION.

## DOUBTS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF DIFFERENT RECITALS

The reality of diferent recitals has been discussed in detail in the preceding pages. But a large group of Orientalists have presented another misleading view about it. Noldeke, Goldzehar and Jeffery etc have written that the difference in the recitals was not auditory in nature but the actual reason was that transcriptions that Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ got prepared did not have dots and diacritical

marks, and hence, it could be read in different ways. Everybody read it according to his own interpretation and that became his recital.[309]

The gist of the claim of Orientalists is that the popular recitals of the Qurān do not have any proof of origin from the Prophet ﷺ but have come up from the different manners of reading the transcription of Sayyidina 'Uthmān ؓ that was without dots and diatrical marks. In fact these transcriptions were kept free of dots and diacritical marks intentionally so that all the recitals that had their origin from the Prophet ﷺ could be incorporated in the script and theirclaim of the orientalists is, therefore baseless.

We have already described that in every age three conditions have been laid down for any recital to be acceptable as original. These three conditions are,

1: There should be room for it in the 'Uthmāni transcriptions.
2: It must conform to the rules of Arabic Grammar.
3: It should have authentic proof of uninterrupted transmission from the Prophet ﷺ.

Consequently, no recital was accepted to be correct until authentic proof was available for its origin from the Prophet ﷺ. If the recitals had come into being simply due to 'Uthmāni Script, each and every recital that could be incorporated in it would have been taken as correct, and the third condition would not have been introduced. Whoever will think over the different recitals of the Qurān will clearly see that at various occasions there was scope for reading a word in several ways but since they did not have proof of originating from the Prophet ﷺ they were not adopted. This will be clear from the following two

309: Arthur Jeffrey Kitāb-ul-Masāhif p7. Rahmānia Press Egypt 1355 A.H. Madhāhib ut Tafsīr ( l Islāmī, Goldzehar Abrabic tr: Doctor Aboul Halīm Najjār p8. Al Khānji Press Cairo 1374 AH.

examples. In *sūrah Al-Baqarah* it has been stated: لا يقبل منها شفاعة ولا يؤخذ منها عدل ولاهم ينصرون In one recital the underlined word is read as لا يقبل (*Ta yuqbalu*) and in another recital it is read as لا تقبل (*Lā tuqbalu*); but a similar verse occurs in *Sūrah Al-Baqarah* with the words ولا تنفعها شفاعة ولاهم ينصرون . Here the only recital is لا تنفعها (*La tan'fa'uhā*) and there is no alternate recital as لا ينفعها (*La yan'fa'uhā*) although it can be incorporated in 'Uthmāni script because in that transcription it was written as لا ىىفعها and thus it could be read in both ways. But because the other recital has no proof of its origin from the Prophet ﷺ, none of the recitors adopted it.

Similary, in *Sūrah Yā-sīn* it occurs انما امره اذا اراد شيئا ان يقول له كن فيكون According to one recital, the underlined word is read as فيكونُ *fa'yakūnu* and in another recital it is read as فيكونَ (*fa yakūna*), but a similar verse in *Surah Al-'Imrān*, اذا قضى امرا فانما يقول له كن فيكونُ has only one recital as (*fayakunu*) and the other recital has not been adopted by any one despite its scope in the 'Uthmāni Script.[310]

There are many other examples like these which clearly indicate that the recitals did not come into being due to the script but because they had authentic uninterrupted link with the Prophet ﷺ and in order to preserve them Sayyidina 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه kept his transcription free of dots and diacritical marks.

That is why only one person (Abu Bakr bin Muqsim[311]) can be named in the entire *Ummah* who had adopted the view that recitals could be invented from 'Uthmāni transcriptions according to one's own interpretations and it was not necessary for them to have their origin from the

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310: Both these examples have been taken from Tarīkh-ul-Qurān pp128, 129 by 'Allāmah Tāhir Kurdi.

311: His full name is Muhammad bin Hasan bin Yāqūb Ibn Muqsim. Born 265 AH, Died 357 AH.

Prophet ﷺ. But when he pronounced his misleading view, he was severely reprimanded by the entire Muslim world, and the Caliph called him before a council of the "Recitors' and "Jurists" and demanded from him to repent which he did, and gave a written proclamation of his turning back from this veiw.[312]

This incident clearly denotes that to innovate recitals from 'Uthmāni transcriptions according to one's own interpretation has always been regarded as an aberration in the Muslim world. There has always been a consensus that only such recitals of the Qurān would be taken as reliable as are originated authentically from the Prophet ﷺ If the recitals had come into being simply due to difference of interpretation in reading the 'Uthmāni script, Ibn Muqsim would not have been reprimanded like that. Hence, the claim of the Orientalists that the recitals came into being due to absence of dots and diacritical marks in 'Uthmāni transcriptions is baseless and unfounded. On the contrary, the truth is that these recitals are proved through uninterrupted chain from the Prophet ﷺ and it was to preserve them that 'Uthmān ؓ had kept his transcriptions devoid of dots and diacritical marks so that all the accepted recitals could be incorporated in their script.

## ELEVENTH OBJECTION:

## RARE RECITALS OF THE QURĀN

Some Orientalists are making a mountain out of a molehill through false assumptions on the basis of rare recitals of the Qurān. Particularly Goldzehar and Jeffery

312: Tarīkh Baghadad al Khatīb v2 p206-208 printed Beirut It is also written in this book that Abu Ahmad Al-Fardi رحمة الله عليه saw him after his death in his dream that he offered *Salāh* turning his back to the Qiblah. He interpreted it as a result of his opposition to the scholars in Recital.

have quoted several examples of these recitals and have drawn self-conceived inferences from them.[313] In these pages it is not possible to present all those examples and expose the reality about them. For this task a whole book will be required.[314] Also we feel that this would be unnecessary. However, we wish to mention some fundamental facts about the rare recitals, and we do hope that with these in view the readers will understand the rejection of the false assumptions of these Orientalists that they have made on the basis of rare recitals.

We have stated earlier that Muslims are united on their understanding that only such recitals of the Qurān are reliable that fulfil three conditions, namely

1: The particular recital can be incorporated in 'Uthmāni script.
2: It should conform to the rules of Arabic Garammar.
3: It must have proof of authentic uninterrupted transmission from the Holy Prophet ﷺ, or at least it must be popular among the scholars of Recitals.

Any recital lacking even one of the these three conditions is termed as "Rare Recital" and no one in the entire *Ummah* took it as reliable. A close look on "Rare Recitals" reveals that one or more of the following defects are present in them.

1: Sometimes that recital is totally innovated, just as the recitals of Abul Faḍl Muḥammad bin Fa'far Khuzā'i that he has attributed to Imām Abu Ḥanīfah. Dāraqutnī and all other scholars have exposed them and declared that they are all innovated.[315]

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313: Madhāhib tafsīr-al-Islami by Goldezehar. and Arthur Jeffery. Materials for the History of the text of the Qurān Leiden 1936. P.6. Arabic translation by Dr. Abdul Halīm Najjār.

314: Dr. Abdul Halīm Najjār has provided marginal notes in his translation of Madhahib Tafsīr ul-Islam by Goldezehar.

315: Al-Nashr fi Qirā'āt 'Ashr. Ibn al Jazari v1. p16 Al-Itqān v1. pp78.79.

2: Sometimes they have very weak precedents, just as the recitals of Ibn-us-Samīfa' and Abus-Samāl or many of those recitals which Abu Dāwood has attributed to different Companions and their followers in his Kitāb-ul-Maṣāḥif.[316]

3: Sometimes the precedent is correct but in fact it is not the recital of the Qurān, but a companion or his follower added one or more words during ordinary discourse as an explanation to some word of the Qurān. Since the Qurān in its entire substance was uninterrupted and thousands of Ḥuffāẓ were present in every period of time, there was no danger of actual addition in the original text due to the addition of explanatory words.[317] Hence, such explanations were not considered objectionable. For example, it is reported that Sa'ad bin Waqqās read وله اخ او اخت من أمّ . In this the underlined words (من أمّ) were an explanatory addition. Similarly, it is reported that Sayyidina 'Uthmān ﷺ read a verse like this. ولتكن منكم امة يدعون الى الخير ويامرون بالمعروف و ينهون عن المنكر و يستعينون الله على ما اصابهم واولائك هم المفلحون.

In this, the underlined phrase و يستعينون الله على ما اصابهم is indeed exegesic addition, because if it has been part of the Qurān in his recital, it must have been present in the transcriptions compiled by him. But this phrase does not occur in any of his seven transcriptions.[318]

There are many such examples found in Rare Recitals.

4: Sometimes it happened that certain recitals were abrogated in the last days of the Prophet's ﷺ life but

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316: An Nashr: v1, p16.

317: An Nashr: Ibn Jazarī v. 1 p 31, 32. Al-Itqān v1 p 79 22,23. Sharh al Mawaṭṭa. Zarqāni v1 p 225.

318: Kanzul 'Ummāl by Ali Muttaqī v1, p286. ref 'Abd bin Hamīd wa Ibn Jarīr.

the Companion who had already memorised it remained unaware of this fact, hence he continued to recite it as he had learnt.[319] Because the other Companions knew that this had been abrogated they did not recite it nor did they consider it to be a correct recital any more.

5: It appears from some of the Rare Recitals that probably some followers of Companions made a mistake in the recitation of the Qurān quite unintentionally (as sometimes happens even with eminent Ḥuffāẓ) and a listener reported it as he had heard.[320]

Whatever *Rare Recitals* of the Qurān have been reported mostly come under one of the above five situations. Obviously, no question arises for accepting these recitals as reliable. Consequently, the *Ummah* never relied on them in any age. That is why these recitals could not even become popular, nothing to say of their being uninterrupted. Hence the inferences drawn by the Orientalists on the basis of *Rare Recitals* that (God forbid) differences exist in the text of the Qurān, is such an unfounded and absurd idea that it deserves no consideration at all from scientific and research point of view. And Allah knows best.

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319: Mushkil-ul-Āthār at Ṭaḥāvi v4, p196 to 202.

320: An-Nashr by Ibn-ul-Jazarī v1, p16.and Al-Maāāni fin-Nazmul Ma'āni Muqad-da-māt fī 'Ulūm ul Qurān p170. Al-Khanji Press.

CHAPTER-7

# TRUTHFULNESS OF THE QURĀN

The Holy Qurān is the last Book of Allah and He has put such a gripping effect in it that leaving apart obduracy and malice, anybody who studies it with sincerity and an open mind will readily admit that verily it is the word of Allah. It makes its impact both on intellect and emotions together and its truthfulness penetrates deep into the heart. An attempt to prove the truthfulness of the Qurān is like trying to prove that the Sun is luminous. But in the following lines we are presenting certain facts which, if given due attention, will make it easier even for a non-Muslim to arrive at the truthfulness of the Qurān.

## MESSENGERSHIP OF SAYYIDINA MUHAMMAD ﷺ

First of all the readers must refresh in their minds our discussion on the "Need for *Waḥy*" in chapter one. It has been made obvious that "*Waḥy* (Divine Revelation)" is a natural requirement of mankind without which it is impossible for a man to lead a righteous life. It is of no use to talk about *Waḥy* and Prophethood, to those who deny the very existence of Allah on this subject. They must be addressed, first, on the existence of God. But anyone believing in the existence of Allah cannot deny the "*Waḥy*". The Being who created man and for him created this universe cannot be expected to leave him helpless in a

world so full of mischief and turbulence and send him no code of life to guide him.

It is this chain of guidance that is called "Waḥy" (Divine Revelation) and Messengership, and it did not start with Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ but was perfected on him. Thousands of Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام had come to this world before him and almost every one of them gave the tidings that in the last era a Messenger will be sent on whom the chain of Prophethood and Messengership will be perfected. Some of the Prophets عليهم السلام had described many of his signs already and some had even told his name. Although a good deal of interpolation has taken place in the scriptures of the previous Prophets yet many of the tidings of the advent of Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ are still found in them.

## TIDINGS ABOUT PROPHET MUḤAMMAD ﷺ IN THE DIVINE SCRIPTURES

In the Book of Deutronomy, Prophet Mūsa عليه السلام (Moses) has been addressed:

> "And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee., and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name. I will require it of him. But the Prophet ﷺ who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak in the name of other gods, even that Prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart; How shall we know the word which the Lord had not spoken? When a Prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord if the thing

follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously thou shall not be afraid of him.

(Bible Deutronomy, 18:17-22)".

During the address to Bani Isra'il it has been clarified that the Prophet who has been prophisised here is not from among them, but would appear among their brothers, that is, Bani Isma'il. Also the New Testament contains the following address of Allah to Prophet Sha'ya ﷺ.

"Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul deligateth, I have put My spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street, A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgement unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he has set judgement in the earth, and isles shall wait for his law...I, the Lord have thee in the righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord: That is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graver images....Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein, the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Qaydār doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock *Salā* sing, let them

> shout from the top of the mountains.[321] Let them give their glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise into the islands. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall site up jealously like a man of war; He shall cry. Yell, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies... They shall be turned back. They shall be greately ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images: Ye are our gods.
>
> (Bible 42:1-17)

In the above passage also it has been clarified that the Prophet ﷺ whose tidings are being given shall be from the progeny of Sayyidina Isma'il ؑ because Qaydār (Kedar) is the name of his son and people of Salaʿ (the popular mountains of Madinah) will rejoice on his arrival. His main combat will be with the idolaters and he will destory idolatry within his sphere of influence. He will also face wars against several nations and ultimately he will triumph over and establish justice among them.

In the Old Testament there are many more similar tidings and it was on account of them that upto the arrival of Sayyidina Isa (Jesus) ؑ it was popularly known to the peopel that apart from him another great Prophet will be

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321: Every word of this tidings points to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. I have explained in the marginal note, to *Bible-se- Qurān tak* v3, p281. Let it suffice to say here that Qaydār is the name of the son of Sayyidina Ismā'il ؑ according to the Bible itself (tawārīkh:1-3) His descendents inhabited the wilderness of Arabia as is clear from the Bible (Sha'yā 21: 13-17). Thus by naming Qaydar this text gives the tiding of a Prophet from the descendents of Isma'īl ؑ, who will be sent to the Arabs.... This text also calls upon the people of *Sala'* to sing. *Sala'* is the famous mountain of Madinah and Thaniyāt al-wada' is situated here. The children of Madinah had stood over it and sang. (طلع البدر علينا the full moom has risen towards us) and welcomed him when the Prophet ﷺ had come here.

coming in this world. Thus, it is mentioned in the Bible of Yuḥanna that when Sayyidina Yaḥyā (John) ﷺ came the people asked him whether he was the Prophet whose tidings had been given by the earlier Prophets. He denied it. The Bible of Yuḥanna has described it thus:

> "And the witness of Yuḥanna is: when the Jews sent to him sooth-sayers from Jerusalem to ask him who he was? Then he affirmed and he did not deny. But he affirmed that he was not Messiah. Then they asked him: Who then are you? Are you Eiliah? He said. No, I am not... Are you "That Prophet"? He said: No... (Bible of Yuhann 1:19-26)

It is evident from this that even during the days of Sayyidina Yaḥyā (John) ﷺ people were waiting for a Prophet other than Sayyidina 'Isā ﷺ, and that Prophet was so popularly known to them that people thought it unnecessary to call him by his name and only the phrase "That Prophet" was sufficient.

And then Sayyidina Isā (Jesus) ﷺ came and he also gave glad tidings of the advent of Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ by name. In the Bible Yuḥanna he has been reported to have said,

> "I speak the truth to you that my departure is useful for you, because if I do not depart then he the *pirclotus*[322] will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you; and he will then blame the world in respect of sins and truthfulness and justice." (Yuhannā 16:7)

Keeping the above prophesies in mind just imagine the times when Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ came to this world. It

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322: In the Greek editions of the Bible this word is pirclotus which means Muḥammad. We have reproduced here only a few tidings but a detailed discourse may be found in *Bible se Qurān Tak* v3, (chapter 6). Matabah Darul 'ulūm.

was the time when the world had been without a Prophet since several centuries. The teachings of the previous Prophets were fading away. Interpolations and alterations in the Scriptures had distorted the earlier doctrines. Polytheism had become almost an epidemic all over the world. Oppression and barbarism was the order of the day. Those who had the knowledge of previous Divine Scriptures were anxiously waiting for the coming of the last Prophet. It was in such an environment that Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ was born in Makkah. He lived in that township for forty years in a manner that every living soul testified to his truthfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, justice and nobility. Makkah at that time was not a big city, but it was a dwelling where every person living in it was like an open book before the others. He spent forty years in that place and the people of Makkah had closely observed his childhood and youth and in all that period nobody could raise a finger on his personal character. On the contrary he became popularly known with the titles of "Truthful" and "Trustworthy". It was not that he had spent his life in seclusion, but was an active participant as a sagacious and prudent individual of the nation. He had trade relations with them, worked on wages settled their mutual disputes, travelled with them, had been living as a family man. In short, he had passed through all the stages of life, as it was in those days, and the whole nation confessed the nobility of his character in all those stages.

Then, in all those forty years he was not educated in any school of learning, had no links with the scholars of the people of the Book, did not learn reading and writing, did not compose any poetic verses, unlike Arabs in general, nor had any interest in poetic congregations, nor ever he mixed with the company of sooth sayers, magicians or fortune-tellers. And all of a sudden he

starts speaking in such a superbly sublime language that all the greatest and the most prominent scholars and poets of the day, bow to its excellence and superiority, tells us of such scientific and knowledgeable realities that the philosophers of the whole world bow their heads before them, discloses such future events that could never be even imagined by any fortune teller or diviner and all these come true exactly as foretold. Such miracles happen from him that baffled the greatest sorcerers of the time. Then within a short span of twenty three years he brought about such an amazing revolution in the entire Arabian peninsula that the savage, illiterate and uncouth Arabs became the torch-bearers of light and learning and wisdom and morality throughout the world. Those who were cutting each other's throat were united like brothers. Where murder, terror were the order of the day, there love and peace reigned supreme. Oppression and barbarism were replaced with justice and fairplay, and the Bedouins of Arabia, who were held in contempt throughout the world for their ignorance ultimately became the heirs of great Persian and Roman Empires and the whole world was compelled to pay tribute to their justice, compassion and nobility.

Anyone looking at these events dispassionately and impartially cannot but reach the conclusion that Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ was the true Messenger of Allah. He was "The promised Prophet" whose tidings were being given since several centuries and who was awaited by the humanity. Hence, his claim that "The Qurān is the words of Allah" is an absolute truth which cannot be questioned.

## MIRACLE OF THE QURĀN

Another convincing proof of truth of the Qurān is its miraculous nature. It is a book the like of which is beyond human power to produce. That is why it is called the greatest

miracle of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. We would like to mention here briefly the sources of the miracle of Qurān a security of which makes it clear that undoubtedy the Qurān is the Word of Allah and that human intellect has no say in it.

Before proceeding any further two things must be borne in mind. First the eloquence and rhetoric, and the penetrating effect of an oration is a quality that pertains to perceptive and cognitive faculty, and it is not possible to describe its full reality and actual nature in words. We can only fix the rules of eloquence and rhetoric through elaborate search, investigation and reasoning, but these principles and rules are not the decisive factors. The merits and demerits of a composition are ultimately decided by instincitve and intuitive abilities. Just as there can be no comprehensive and meaningful description of a beautiful face, or just as the grace and relicacy of a colourful flower cannot be confined within words, or just as the fragrance of *musk* cannot be imparted through words, or just as the flavour and taste of a delicious fruit cannot be described in words, similarly it is just not possible to describe in full measure the eloquence and rhetoric of a composition. But listening to it, a cultivated person will atonce realise its beauty and elegance.

Secondly, in the matter of eloquence and rhetoric of a language the taste and cognition of only those people would be reliable whose mother tongue it happens to be. But no other person, howsoever proficient in a foreign language, can equal in appreciating its finer qualities the man whose mother tongue it is.

Now, imagine the people of Arabia in the Days of Ignorance when oratory happened to be the most dominant passion in the society. Each and every person in the society had a natural taste for literature and poetry.

Eloquence and rhetoric were their life blood. The

liveliness that marked their gatherings, the gaity of their fairs and the virtues on which they boasted themselves so much all found their expression through poetry and literature. They were so proud indeed of their literary accomplishments that they contemptuously dubbed all the other peoples of the world as "*'Ajam*" The Dumb. It was in this atmosphere that there appeared on the score an unlettered person Muḥammad ﷺ. He presented before them an oration, and declared it to be the Word of Allah, because,

لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَن يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ
لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ○

> If mankind and the Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qurān, they could never produce the like thereof even if they backed up one another.
> (Al-Isra, 17:88)

Such a proclamation was no ordinary thing. It came from a person who had never learned anything from the renowned poets and scholars of the time, had never recited even a single piece of poetry in their poetic congregations, had never attended the company of soothsayers. And far from composing any poetry himself, he did not even remember the verses of other poets. Such, indeed, was the man whom these masters in the art of eloquence used to call the founder of a new religion. If this claim were to be established as the truth, the entire structure of their ancestral faith would crumble and the age - old customs and traditions would be doomed for ever. This proclamation was therefore the greatest challenge to their literary prowess, as also a fatal blow to their creed and beliefs. This was also a call for combat against their national honour and personal pride that the haughty Arabs could never let go unchallenged. A hush fell over the whole galaxy of these stirring orators and fiery poets. Not a soul

stepped forward to accept this challenge. After sometimes the Qurān proclaimed once again:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ○ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ○

> And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have revealed to our servant (Muḥammad) then bring a surah like thereof, and call your helpers besides Allah, if you are truthful. But if you do it not — and you can never do it — then fear the Fire whose fuel is mankind and stones. It is kept prepared for the unbelievers.
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 2:23-24)

Their silence remained unbroken as before. None of them was able to compose even a few sentences to match the Qurānic verses. Just think that they were a people who according to 'Allāmah Jurjāni,[323] could never resist ridiculing the idea in their poetry if they heard that there was someone at the other end of the globe who prided himself on his eloquence and rhetorical speech. It is unthinkable that they could keep quiet even after such repeated challenges and dare not come forward. There can be no other explanation of this except that these stalwarts of eloquence and rhetoric were helpless in meeting the challenge of the Qurān. They had left no stone unturned for persecuting the Prophet ﷺ. They tortured him, called him insane, sorcerer, poet and sooth-sayer, but failed utterly in composing even a few sentences like the Qurānic verses.

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323: Ar-Risālah Ash Shāfiyah: Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni, Rasāil fi 'Aijāz ul-Qurān Dar ul-Ma'arif p109, Egypt.

It was not only that these fiery and powerful poets and orators were incapable of holding out against the Quran but many of them frankly acknowledged its amazing and magical effect. Imām Hākim and Bayhaqi have quoted the following words of Walīd bin Mughirah about the Qurān:

والله ان لقوله الذى يقول حلاوة وان عليه لطلاوة ... وانه ليعلوا وما يُعلى -

By God! The words which he speaks are extremely sweet and elegant. This speech shall overwhelm and cannot be suppressed.[324]

This Walīd bin Mughīrah was the nephew of Abu Jahl. When Abu Jahl came to know that his nephew was getting impressed with these words he went to him to admonish him. Walid retorted "By God! None of you knows the beauty or ugliness of a poetry better than I do. By God! what Muḥammad says has nothing to do with poetry.[325]

Concerning this same person Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ says that after the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, when time of Ḥajj came close Walīd bin Mughīrah gathered all the Quraysh together and said to them that the months of Ḥajj were approaching and different tribes from all over Arabia would come, hence they should decide their strategy about Muḥammad so that no differences cropped up. The Quraysh proposed that they would say that Muḥammad was a sooth-sayer. Walīd said, "By God! His words are not the words of sooth-sayers". The Quraysh then said that they would say he was insane. Walīd said, "There is not even a trace of insanity in him."Quraysh then said that they would

324: Al-Khaṣā'iṣ-al-Kubrā by Suyūṭi v1.1, p113 & Al-Itqān v2, p117!!

325: Hākim and Bayhaqi from Ibn 'Abbās (Al-Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubrā v1, p13.)

call him a poet. Walīd replied, "I am fully conversant with all the various forms of poetry. What he says is definitely not poetry." The Quraysh then said, "We would say he is sorcerer". Initially, Walīd rejected this idea as well, but finally agreed to it, pleading that his words do have magical powers and they cause separation between father and son, and between one brother and another.[326]

Similarly, there was 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah, a prominent leader of Quraysh who went to Muḥammad ﷺ to negotiate a treaty with him. Muḥammad ﷺ recited the opening verses of *Surah Hā Mīm Sajdah* before him. He heard them with rapt attention until the Prophet ﷺ went into prostration on the verse of prostration when he got up and in a state of bewilderment went home. People came to him to know the result of his talk with Muḥammad. He said, "By God! Muḥammad has recited such words before me that the like of which I have never heard before. I did not know what to say."[327]

There are many other instances preserved in the pages of history which denote that great and renowned scholars and poets not only failed to accept the challenge of the Qurān but were actually forced to acknowledge the deep penetrating effect of the Qurān through their words or actions.

Some non-Muslim writers have expressed the idea that may be someone had responded to the challenge and composed something on the pattern of Qurānic verses but possibly they did not reach us. Abu Sulaimān Khaṭṭābi (died 388 AH) who was the leading scholar in lexicon and literature, apart from being a renowned scholar in

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326: Bayhaqī and Ibn Isḥāq (Al-Khaṣāiṣ al Kubrā v1, p113).
327: Bay-haqī and Ibn Ishāq from Muḥammad bin Ka'b (Al-Khasais al Kubrā, v1, p115) and Abu Ya'la from Jābir (Jam'a Al-Fawāid (v2, p26)

*Hadith* commenting on this view has made a cogent observation in the following words.

> "This is an absolutely false conception because it has been always customary with the high and the low alike to maintain a record of important events for the benefit of posterity, specially of the events on which the attention of the people is particularly focussed. This matter (the challenge of the Qurān) had attained the widest possible publicity at that time, and it is impossible that if anything was brought forth against the Qurān would not have reached us. But if this is considered possible then it may be possible, too, that there may have been another or several other Prophets advented at that time and divine Scriptures may have been sent to them and these events did not reach us. When this is inconceivable, no less so is the idea that Qurān's challenge was met."[328]

However, some buffoons did compose a few ridiculous things which are still preserved in the pages of history and the Arabs have laughed at them. For example, someone composed the following sentences on the style of *Surah "Al-Qāri'ah"* and *Surah "Al-fīl"*:

اَلْفِيْلُ مَاالْفِيْلُ وَمَا اَدْرٰكَ مَاالْفِيْلُ لَهٗ مشفرٌ طوِيْلٌ وَ ذَنَبٌ اَثِيْلٌ
وَمَا ذَاكَ مَنْ خلَقَ رَبِّنَا بِقَلِيْلٍ۔

Somebody else had composed the following phrases:

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ بِالْحُبْلٰى اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا نسمةً تسعٰى
بَيْنَ شراسيف و حشٰى۔

328: Thalāth Rasā'il fi Ī'jāzi l Qurān p5. Darul-Ma'ārif Egypt.

Musaylimah Kazzab had claimed the following sentences as "Waḥy" revealed to him:[329]

يا ضفدع نقى كم تنقين لا الماء تكدرين ولا الوارد تنفرين

Then again, long after the revelation of the Quran a renownéd Arabic man of letters and essayist and translator of *Kalilah wo D imnah* 'Abdullah bin Muqaffa (D.142 AH) intended to write a rejoinder to the Quran but just then he heard a child reciting the verse...

وَقِيلَ يَاأَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَاسَمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي (هود:٤٤)

and at once he declared "I testify that it is impossible to echo these words and verily it is not a human composition."[330]

## MIRACULOUS ATTRIBUTES OF THE QURAN

It will now be proper to describe those important attributes on account of which the words of the Quran are regarded as miraculous. Obviously it is beyond human power to encompass them all. However, within the scope of limited insight of man these can be divided into four headings. (1) Miracle of words (2) Miracle of syntax (3) Miracle of style, and (4) Miracle of system.

## MIRACLE OF WORDS

No poet or scholar of any language, no matter how consummate in his art, can claim that he has never used any unpolished word in his writings because sometime one is compelled to use such words in order to express one's thoughts. But, it is a miracle of the Quran that from the first to the last word (from *Surah Fatiḥah* to *An-Nas*) there

329: Bayan I'jaz il-Quran, Khaṭṭabi- Thalasa Rasa'il fil-Quran p.50.51

330: I'jaz ul-Quran, Baqil-lani, v. 1, p.50. Al-Itqan.

is not a single word that is inelegant. Not only that but the placing of every word is such that replacing it with another word with the same eloquence and rhetoric effect is impossible. Arabic is an extremely vast language and one of the richest languages of the world in relation to its stock of words. Hence it contains numerous words with minor differences to express one meaning. Out of this treasure of words the Qurān uses only that word which is the most suitable in respect of its context, expression of meaning and the flow of style. This thing can be clarified by a few examples.

1: In the pre-prophetic era several words were in use to express the meaning of Death (*Maut*) e.g.[331]

| S No | Arabic | English |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | موت | Death |
| 2 | هلاك | |
| 3 | فناء | |
| 4 | حتف | |
| 5 | شعوب | |
| 6 | حمام | |
| 7 | منون | |
| 8 | سام | |
| 9 | قاضيه | |
| 10 | هميغ | |
| 11 | نيط | |
| 12 | فود | |
| 13 | مقدار | |
| 14 | جباز | |
| 15 | قتيم | |

331: Ibn S-idah Andlusi has enumerated all these words and given examples from the poetry of the Arabs (Al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ, Ibn S-idah v6, p115)

| | |
|---|---|
| 16 | حلّاق |
| 17 | طلاطل |
| 18 | طلاطله |
| 19 | عول |
| 20 | ذام |
| 21 | كفت |
| 22 | جداع |
| 23 | مُخزرة |
| 24 | عالج |

But most of these words reflected the ancient faith of Arabs that due to death the components of a man were destroyed for ever, with no possibility of a resurrection. This was because they did not believe in Resurrection, Hereafter and Reckoning. That is why all the words which they used for "Death" had a reflection of this view. If the Qurān had remained contented with erroneous impression of its conformity with these ancient interpretation of the Arabs, an erroneous impression of its conformity with these false notions about Death might have been created. Hence wherever the Qurān describes the reality of Death, it uses a new word in preference to the two dozen words named above and, thus, it has given to the Arabic language such a beautiful, short, concise and eloquent word that clearly depicts the reality of Death. The word is توفّی (Tawaffī) the literal meaning of which is "to receive something wholly." The word also clarifies that Death does not mean eternal extinction but it is returning of the soul to Allah, and thus whenever He would like He can reassemble all the components together and return the soul to it. This word was never used for Death before it occurred in the Qurān. And thus it is that while using other words for 'death' in "*Al Mukhaṣṣaṣ*", Ibn Sīdah

has quoted examples from couplets of Arab poets but for "Tawaffī" he has quoted only the Qurān.[332]

2: In every language there are words which, in their phonetic effect, are not regarded as eloquent and welcome, but because other words do not exist to express their meanings people are forced to use them. But on such occasions the Qurān has used such elegant styles that they create feelings of ecstasy in any person with a literary taste. For example, all the various words that are used for baked bricks for building construction are considered to be crude, degraded and offensive to good taste viz أَجُرٌّ (Ajurrun) قَرْمَدٌ (Qarmadun) and طُوْبٌ (Toob). Now, it was intended to say in the Qurān that Fir'awn (Pharoah) ordered his minister Hāmān to bake the bricks for constructing a lofty palace for him. In order to describe it the use of the word brick was unavoidable, but the Qurān has described it in such a miraculous manner that it conveyed the meaning splendidly without suffering the burden of the unwanted words. It says:

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَاأَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرِيْ فَأَوْقِدْ لِيْ يَاهَامَانُ عَلَى الطِّيْنِ فَاجْعَل لِّيْ صَرْحًا

And Fir'aun said, "O chiefs! I know not that you have any god other than me. so kindle for me. O Hāmān, a fire upon the clay, and make for me a lofty tower."[333]

(Al-Qasas, 28:38)

3: There are some words in Arabic that are soft and eloquent in their singular form but their plurals are regarded unchaste. For instance, the word ارض (Earth) is a delightful word. It has two plural forms in use ارضون and اراضى and both of them are regarded as inelegant and their

332: Al-Bayān li Mushkilāt i.l Qurān, Shaikh. Binori p56.
333: Ref Al-Mathl As-Sā'ir, Ibn Athīr p71.

use affects the smoothness and flow of the language. But where the use of plural is unavoidable the scholars of Arabia were compelled to use these words. Contrary to this, the Qurān has used at many places the word سموات (skies) as plural and in conjunction with it the word ارض as singular and not used its plural anywhere. However, at one place "Seven earths" were to be mentioned and plural form had to be used. But the Qurān avoided it in a miraculous manner and yet adopted a style that the sense has been conveyed thoroughly, and not only that no burden was put on the language but its beauty had only increased. It says:

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ

Allah is He who created seven heavens, and of the earth their like. (At-Ṭalāq. 65:12)

Just see! The plural of سماء (heaven) has been used here but the plural of ارض (earth) has been beautifully avoided and if one ponders over the mysteries and subtleness in it a stream of miraculous rhetoric could be seen flowing with grandeur and elegance.

4. Some unbelievers have objected to some words of the Qurān as being harsh. for example the word ضيزى, but they forget that although some words may be harsh in themselves but a writer or an orator uses them with such skill that they cannot be replaced with other word. For example, one of the neck veins is called اخدع (akhda'). Two Arab poets have used it in their poetry but there is a world of defference in the use of both of them. One poet Abu Tammām has said:

يا دهر قوم عن اخدعيك فقد

اضححت هذ الانام عن خرقك

In this verse this word appears to be very harsh and heavy. But another poet 'Abdullah bin Sammah of Ḥamāsah has used it thus.

تلفتّ نحو الحيّ حتّى وجدتني

وَ جعفتُ من الاصغاء لِيتّا واخدعا

Here the same word has been used with such a flow and elegance that it does not hurt one's aesthetic sense in the least. Rather, on the whole it fits in most beautifully in the tender texture of the couplet.

In the Qurān the word ضيزى (Ḍīza) has also been used with such matchless beauty that no other word, no matter how elegant it may be, can replace it.

أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ○ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ○

What, are for you the males and for Him the females? This indeed is an unjust division. (An-Najm, 53:21-22)

If we look at the words by themselves, the Arabic قسمة جائره or قسمة ظالمة seem more appropriate than ضيزى . But the style in which it is used in the Qurān ضيزى is apt and (جائرة) or (ظالمة) would mar the flow of the language.[334]

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334: All these four examples are from Yatimah Al Bayān by Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Banorī. This book is a prelude to Mushkilāt ul Qurān by 'Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmiri. He has cited the examples from Mushkilāt ul Qurān and al-Mathl us Sā'ir fi Adab al Kātib wa Shāir by Allama Ibn Athīr.

## MIRACLE OF SYNTAX

Having discussed the miracle of words let us consider the structure of sentences, their harmony and placement. Here also we find the miracle of the Qurān at its supreme perfection. There is such a grandeur, lucidity and sweetness in the arrangement of its sentences that nothing equal to it can be produced. Here, only one example may suffice. Extracting blood money from a murderer was regarded as a virtuous act among the people of Arabia, and several proverbial phrases were popular to express its advantages, القتل احياء لجميع (killing is collective life), القتل انفى للقتل (killing checks killing). These phrases were so popular that they were commonly used and were regarded as eloquent. The Qurān has also expressed the same sense but with what stunning effect! It says,

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ

And in (the law of) equitable retribution there is life for you. (Al-Baqarah, 2:179)

From whatever angle you look at the sweep, brevity lucidity, grandeur and import of this sentences. It appears to be a masterpiece of eloquence, and all the other afore mentioned sentences appear to be clumsy before it.

## MIRACLE OF STYLE

The most brilliant exposition of miracle of Qurān is noticeable in its style and this can be perceived by anyone. The following are its striking miraculous attributes:

In spite of the fact that the prose of Qurān does not follow the rules and regulations of poetry, it is infinitely, more rythmic and appealing than any poetry. This is explained by the fact that a man's aesthetic sense does not get the same pleasure from prose that it gets through

poetry. Looking for its reason one finds that the secret lies in the arrangement of words that creates a particular sonic rhythm. In the ancient Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetry this is produced by the prefixed meters of the lines and verses. One's aesthetic taste gets a thrill when one hears the words of the same measure again and again, and when rhyming words are added to this measure the thrill is still more magnified. But the rules of meter and rhymes are not the same in every region and language. The people of every language fix different rules according to their own taste and temperament. The Arabs, for example have kept their poetry confined to such moulds of meter and rhymes that were designed by Khalil bin Aḥmad and others. In the Persian poetry the scope of measures was further expanded and new meters were adopted but more strict conditions were imposed in the bounds of rhyming words and their placements. Thus, in Arabic poetry قبور (Qaboor) and (Kabir) are considered to be rhyming with each other. If 'Qaboor' in one couplet is followed by 'Kabir' in the next it is not considered to be a flaw. But this is not allowed in Persian poetry. Similarly, if half the phrase occurs in one line and the other half in the following line of a verse it is not considered improper in Arabic poetry but it is highly so in Persian poetry; in fact such a verse is not regarded as a verse at all. Also, there occur so many omissions in Arabic poetry that sometimes the actual meter becomes quite distorted, but this does not occur in Persian poetry. Similarly, there is no concept of ردیف (Radīf)[335] in Arabic poetry but a غزل (Ghazal)[336] is regarded as insipid without

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335: Radīf is the word or words that occur as the end-phrase of a verse and is repeated as such in every verse.

336: Ghazal: Special kind of poem whose every verse is separate in subject matter but has the same meter, rigidly rhymed and ends on Radīf.

Radīf in Persian poetry. Also, in the original Arabic poetry many kinds of the poem did not exist that are quite common in Persian poetry.

Despite such differences in Arabic and Persian poetry there exist a great deal of unanimity in the meters. But ancient Hindi poetry is still different. Here the weighting of words is done with the number of alphabets each word contains. If two words have the same number of alphabets they are considered in balance even if their motions and diacritical sounds may be different. Sometimes one finds a wide divergence in the meters or rhymes in Hindi couplets and even in the number of alphabets yet they are recited and sung with great gusto and the effect they produce is undeniable.

In this context the trend of English poetry is perhaps more liberal than all the others. In it line may have variable proportions in its metric length and there may be no consideration of rhyming, but a specific rhythm is produced by the syllabic pronunciation of words, and it is this rhythm that imparts pleasure to the people of that language.

It becomes clear from this discussion that there is no universal standard for the fixed rules of meters and rhymes for producing pleasure and symphony in the poetry. That is why such rules keep on changing in different languages and regions. But there is one thing which is common among all the languages and nations, and that is a "Balanced Sonic Rhythm", which means to arrange the words in a manner that their pronunciation and audibility are delightful to a man's aesthetic perceptions. But since man is powerless to liberate this common value from the established moulds of meters and rhymes, he feels bound to adhere to the rules and regulations framed within his own setting whenever he wants to create the pleasures of poetry. The miracle of

Qurān is that it did not chose any of the rules of poetry prevalent in different regions of the world, but only adopted the common value of the "Balanced Sonic rhythm" which is the ultimate aim of all these rules and regulations. That is why the Qurān, despite being a prose composition, carries an inherent grandeur and elegance of poetry, and not only the Arabs but people all over the world experience an extraordinary thrill and impact when they hear it.

This explains very well why some of the idolaters of Arabia had termed the Qurān a poetry? Evidently, the popular definition of poetry does not apply in the case of the Qurān, and the idolaters of Arabia, despite all their faults did have enough sense to distinguish between prose and poetry. They were not unaware that for a poetic composition meters and rhymes were essential and that the Qurān was independent of them. Yet they called it poetry because they felt greater pleasure and effect than poetry in its style and symphony; and they knew that even without conforming to the restrictions of meters and rhymes it carries in full measure the aesthetic beauty to meet the demands of ecstatic feelings and poetic taste that cannot be obtained even with a rigid conformity to meters and rhymes.

What new principles have been adopted by the Qurān to create the effect of this permanent sonic rhythm? It is beyond human power to describe it because words and phrases cannot adequately translate the true effect that pervades the style of the Qurān. However, anybody having a literary taste and aesthetic perceptions can verify for himself the truth of our statement while reciting the Qurān.[337]

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337: This discussion is adopted from al-Fauzul Kabīr by Shah Waliullah explanatory note. Details may be seen there in section 2 chapter3.

2: The scholars of the science of rhetoric have laid down three categories of "style": (1) Oratorical (2) Literary and (3) Scientific. All of them have their own separate spheres, distinct qualities and different occasions, and it is not possible to combine all the three of them in one single piece of writing. When making a speech you have particular style; when writing an academic treatise, you adopt a different style, and when writing litereary prose your style differs from both of them. But the miracle of the Qurān is that it combines all the three styles together. In it the force of oratory the elegance of literature and the soberity of an academic piece all go together and none of them loses its force and quality.

3: All at the same time the Qurān's addresses happen to be rustic, villagers, educated persons, learned scholars and experts in sciences and its style impresses all of them equally. On one side, an illiterate person finds simple realities in it and he feels that the Qurān has been revealed exclusively for his own benefit, while on the other side, learned scholars and researchers discover such scientific truths when they study it closely, that they feel that this book is full of such deeper knowledge about the sciences and the arts that a man of ordinary understanding just cannot grasp them.

For a man of average mind the style of Qurānic reasoning is very simple and mostly based on arguments drawn from direct observation. It proves the complex philosophical concepts of Unity of Allah, Prophethood and Messengership, the Hereafter, Creation of life and Existence of God with arguments based on the direct observation of man; and drawing attention to Natural phenomena it has described such realities as may be easily understood by a man of average intellect. But if you go deeper into the same simple realities you will also find

purely intellectual and logical arguments which satisfy also those fond of philosophical hair-splitting about everything. Quite in passing it has also resolved the complex problems of philosophy and science the solution of which has always eluded eminent and renowned philosophers.

4: If the same thing is repeated over and over again the listeners get fed up after a certain stage, no matter how distinguished may be the place held by the speaker in literature. The force of speech is lost and its impact is very much reduced. But with Qurān it is different. In it the same thing has sometimes been repeated scores of times and the same event has been described several times yet everytime one gets out of it a new pleasure, a new feeling and a new impact.

5: Elegance in a speech and its appealing sweetness are two contradictory qualities. Different style has to be adopted for each of them. It is beyond human power to combine both of them in one single piece. It is a miracle of Qurānic style alone that both these qualities are to be found blended together in most perfect synthesis.

6: The Qurān has treated with the height of eloquence those topics to which human mind could not give literary beauty whatever he may do to achieve it. For example, the "Law of Inheritance" is such a dry and intractable subject that even all the scholars and poets of the world cannot create any literary beauty while dealing with it, but then just go through the verses of *Sūrah An-Nisā* beginning with يوصيكم الله في اولادكم الخ and you cannot help exclaiming that this is an extraordinary composition. All these verses have described "The Law of Inheritance" but in such a beautiful and elegant manner that deeply moves one's aesthetic sense.

7: Every poet and scholar has his own particular field and any departure from it makes his work colourless. In

Arabic Imrā-ul-Qays is the patriarch of Ghazal, Nābighah is famous for portraying fear and horror, A'āsha for beauty of aspiration and attributes and Zuhair for hope and desire. The same is the case with every language, but the Qurān has dealt with so many diverse subjects that it is very difficult to encompass them all. But whether there be incentive or admonition, promise or reprimand, advice and preaching or stories and examples, matters of faith or injunctions, everywhere it shows the highest standard of eloquence and beauty.

8: Brevity is the exclusive attribute of Qurānic style and its miraculous excellence in this respect is quite marked. Since the Qurān has been sent as a guide for all times to come, till the Last Day, it deals, in a pithy manner, with such a vast number of topics that one can get guidance from it in every age. Despite the passage of fourteen hundred years its subjects have not become out dated. Human life has suffered great many vicissitudes many a great revolution have taken place, but the Glorious Qurān has remained eternally fresh and it shall remain. It is not a book of history yet it is the most authentic source of history; it is not a book of law and politics yet in short sentence it has described such principles of starecraft and global conquest that will guide mankind for all times to come; it is not a book of science and philosophy but it has unravelled many mysteries of philosophy and science; it is not a book of economics and sociology yet it has given such concise guidelines in both these subjects that it is only now that all the sciences and arts of the world are approaching nearer to it after faltering for centuries.

## MIRACLE OF SYSTEM

A miracle of the Qurān lies in the mutual link and coordination, and arrangement and system of its verses. If

you recite the Qurān in a cursory manner it would apparently seem that every verse deals with an independent topic and there is no link among them. That is why the commentators of the Qurān stand divided into two groups. One group holds the view that the Qurān was revealed piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years therefore there is no need to look for any inter-connecting link between its verses and that each verse deals with an exclusive subject. Contrary to this, the other group maintains that as a book the Qurān is an organic whole and it is interlinked from the beginning to the end, and it must be studied from this angle. This second group contends that inconsistency in a book is a sign of its defect and the word of Allah is most certainly free from it. In response to this the first group argues that just as there is no order and arrangement in natural sceneries, but actually their beauty lies in their dissimilarity that somewhere there are meandering rivers, somewhere rugged mountains and somewhere valleys high and low, similarly the beauty and grace of the Qurān lies rather in this fixed structure. The topic of each and every couplet of a ghazal is different and nobody takes it amiss likewise dissimilar arrangement in the Qurān is no defect. But the fact remains that there is an exceeding graceful link between the various verses of the Qurān that cannot be denied. If an orderly arrangement was not intended for the Qurān there was no need to follow a different order for writing it down from its chronological order. The Qurān might have been recorded in the same order in which it was revealed. A different order fixed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a clear proof of the fact that the Qurānic verses are interlinked. But, of course, it is a rather delicate link and it needs a lot of deep thinking and insight to get to it.

In this way the individual verse remains intact and the

generalisation of its word is not lost.

In addition to this, the general style of speech and poetry among the Arabs at that time was also the same that the subject matter therein had a distinct place rather than being bound and interlinked to each other. Hence, the Qurānic style was in conformity with the literary taste of that time. Thus at a cursory glance every verse would appear to be independent but a close look will reveal that the book is one continuous and interlinked whole.

The style adopted by the Qurān in its arrangement and system is, therefore, its most subtle miracle, and a reproduction the like of it is beyond human power. Many scholars have written exclusive books to explain the system of Qurānic arrangement and some commentators have made special references to it in their writings. Imām Rāzi's Tafsīr Kabīr is probably the most commendable work in this connection. He had a divine gift for elaborating the system of the Qurān. After him Qaḍī Abus Sa'ūd has also made special efforts to describe the attributes of the Qurānic system. Subsequent commentators have mostly been the gleaners from the above two.

A glimpse of the System of the Qurān can be seen in the following example. In *Sūrah Al-Ḥijr* it is stated

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيْٓ أَنِّيْٓ أَنَا الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ○ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِيْ هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيْمُ ○

(O Prophet!) Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful, and that My chastisement is the painful chastisement.

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ ○

And inform them of the guests of Ibrāhīm. (Al-Hijr:15:51)

After this, the well known event of the angels coming to Sayyidina Ibrāhīm ﷺ has been described. Apparently there seems to be no connection between the two things. But a closer attention makes it clear that the incident of Sayyidina Ibrāhīm ﷺ is in fact supporting the first sentence, because the angels who came to him did two things. First, they gave the glad tidings of a virtuous son, Isḥāq to Sayyidina Ibrāhīm, and secondly the same angels had brought destruction of the dwelling town of Sayyidina Lūt ﷺ. The first one was a manifestation of انا الغفور الرحيم (I am the Forgiving, the Meriful), and the second was the manifestation of عذابي هو العذاب الاليم (My chastisement is a painful chastisement). Thus the two sentences are closely connected but when looked at separately they also hold an independent place of their own.[338]

## PROPHESIES OF THE QURĀN

Whenever Allah sends a Messenger and reveals His words to him, He lets him know some of the future events so that he may prove the words as from Allah. Although predictions are also made by astrologers, they are never certain, and even the greatest astrologer could never claim that all his predictions come true and no mistake is ever made. Morever, it has been the tradition with Allah that the prophesies made by a false pretender of Prophethood are never allowed and not even the bitterest enemies of Islam can deny them. In these pages it is not possible to describe all of them in detail, but a few important events are being given as examples.

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338: For details see "Bible se Qurān tak" by Kiranwi p357, v2. We have dealt with this subject briefly. Further reading: Bible se Qurān tak", Maulana Raḥmat ullah Kiranwi edited by the author of this book v2, p357. Also I'jāz-el-Qurān by 'Allāmah Shabbīr Aḥmad Uthmani.

## VICTORY OF ROMANS

While the Prophet ﷺ was still in Makkah after having been commissioned to Prophethood and was being subjected to all sorts of persecutions by the idolaters of Makkah exactly at the same time the two great powers of Rome and Persia were repeatedly beaten and vanquished, and suffering a horrible loss in men and material, the Roman government was so utterly exhausted that, far from being in a position to launch a counter-attack, it could not even take a firm stand anywhere. This situation was a matter of jubilation for the pagans of Arabia, as they identified Iranians, for their being fire-worshippers with themselves and the Romans, as the people of the Book, with Muslims. The dominance of Iranians, in their eyes, presaged their own victory and defeat of Muslims. In this war the Persian armies were constantly winning against the Romans who were losing on all fronts and the Persian armies, subjecting important cities of Syria to fire and destruction, were advancing ahead at a terrific speed.

It was under these circumstances that these initial verses of *Sūrah ar Rūm* revealed:

الم ○ غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ○ فِيْ أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ
سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ○ فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ لِلّٰهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ
وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○ بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ وَهُوَ
الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ○ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ○

Alif-Lam, Mīm. The Romans have been defeated, in the land close by and after (this) defeat of theirs, they will

> soon be victorious within a few years. To Allah belongs the command before and after and on that day the Believers will rejoice in Allah's help. He helps whom He will, and He is the Mighty the Merciful. this is Allah's promise. Allah fails not in His promise but most of mankind know not. (Ar-Rūm, 30:1-6)

For those who were aware of the military situation concerning the Romans and Persians this prediction was absolutely incredible. Hence a chieftain of the Quraysh Ubbay bin Khalaf had a bet with Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه that he would give him ten camels if the Romans emerged victorious within three years, otherwise Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه would give him an equal number of camels. Betting at that time was not yet prohibited so Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه agreed. When Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه told the Prophet ﷺ of this bet he said that the Qurān had used the word بضع سنين (few years) and in Arabic the word بضع applies to a number between three and nine, hence he should extend the time limit to nine years and increase the number of camels. Consequently, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه had the bet increased to nine years for a hundred camels instead of ten even though there were no apparent signs of the fulfilment of this predictison. In fact, even that the Persians kept marching forwards, until they reached the city walls of Roman capital, Constantionople. The renowned historian Edward Gibbon has commented on this prediction thus:

> When this prophesy was made no prediction could be more unbelievable because the initial twelve years of Heraclius were evidently declaring an end to the Roman Empire. (Fall of Roman Empire).
> (v.5 p.73-74)

But exactly seven years after his first defeat the Roman Emperor sallied forth from the capital and inflicted crushing

defeats on Persians at several places, and after that the Roman armies were victorious everywhere.

Meanwhile a large number of Muslims had migrated to Madinah and their wars with the idolaters of Makkah had already begun, and the day on which 313 ill equipped Muslims were beating back at the battlefield of Badr one thousand heavily armed warriors of Makkans, came the news that the Romans had defeated the Persians, and it was then realised that the Qurānic verse:

يومئذ يفرح المؤمنون بنصر الله

On that day the Believers will rejoice in Allah's help

was meant to denote the twin happiness of the Roman victory as well as their own victory at Badr.

## NEWS ABOUT THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

When the Prophet ﷺ left Makkah for migration as a result of the persecutions of idolaters, and after three days of stay at the cave of Thaur came across the road to Makkah near Jaḥfah while on his way to Madinah quite naturally he had nostalgic feelings about his birth place and felt aggrieved at parting with it for ever. On this occasion the following verse was revealed to him.

إِنَّ الَّذِيْ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلٰى مَعَادٍ

Surely He who has ordained the Qurān for you (O Prophet), will bring you back.[339] (Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:85)

At that time he had left Makkah in a state of privation and in view of this apparently there was no chance of this prophecy being fulfilled. But only within a few years he entered the city of Makkah as a conqueror and the prophecy was fulfilled.

339: Jama' ul Fawāid v3, p107 Ṣaḥiḥ Bukhārī.

## WISHING FOR DEATH BY THE JEWS

During the times of the Prophet ﷺ the Jews used to say that success and prosperity in the Hereafter was destined for the Jews alone and that they would certainly go to the Paradise. The Qurān has replied:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ
النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِيْنَ ۝ وَلَنْ يَّتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا
بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيْهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِالظَّالِمِيْنَ ۝

> Say (O Prophet): If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively yours and not for others of mankind (as you assert), then long for death if you are truthful. And they will never long for it, because of what their own hands have forwarded. And Allah is Knower of the evildoers. (Al-Baqarah 2:94-95)

This challenge and prediction was made in Madinah in an atmosphere where there were numerous dwellings of the Jews in and around and the Muslims were constantly engaged in debates and arguments with them. If this challenge had not been given through Divine revelation the Jews, who were not prepared to lose any chance of falsifying the Prophet ﷺ, would have easily come forward and wished for death openly. In this way the debates that had been going on day and night would have been settled in a moment. But they were all struck dumb after the revelation of this verse and not one of them came forward to accept this challenge.

Whatever may be the opinion of non-Muslims about the Prophethood and Messengership of Muḥammad ﷺ even his enemies never denied the fact that in sagacity and wisdom and in intellectual capabilities and

statesmanship he stood at the summit. Even a man with an ordinary understanding cannot be expected, without having the fullest confidence, to throw a challenge or make a prophesy, that may be negated by his opponents in a moment. It was never possible for a man as great as the Holy Prophet ﷺ in sagacity, wisdom and statesmanship to throw this challenge without the Divine guidance.

## SAFETY OF THE QURĀN

Allah made no promise to preserve the Divine Scriptures revealed to different Prophets عليهم السلام before the Holy Qurān. Hence they could not exist in their original forms. Muslims believe that the books called *Torah Zubūr*, or *Injeel* are not the same heavenly Scriptures as they were sent down but there havebeen a lot of interpolations and changes in them.[340] Even the People of the Book themselves admit it and the most staunch Jew or Christian cannot claim that every word of these Scriptures is Divine and no interpolation in the original text has been made. Contrary to this the Qurān had already predicted about it that.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ○

> Surely We have revealed the Admonition (Qurān) and surely We are its Guardian. (Al-Hijr, 15:9)

This challenge has stood the test of time and during the fourteen long centuries not even a dot or an iota of its words could be destroyed nor any attempt at interpolation in its text succeeded. Islam has always been under attack of hostile forces which spared no efforts to subdue it, but

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340: For a detailed discussion see Bible se Qurān tak by Mawlāna Raḥmatullah Kiranavi and edited by the author.

none of them could succeed in destroying the Qurān or making interpolations in it even in those times when its transcriptions were limited in numbers and the means of publilcity and printing were scarce. Look at *Toreh* how Bukht Naṣ-ar, the ruler of Bab il (Babylon) and according to the traditions of Bani Isra'īl nobody except 'Uzair (Ezra) knew *Torah* by heart, hence he got it rewritten through his memory after all its copies were destroyed.[341] According to reports from Banu Isra'il themselves, the ruler of Rome, Anitos Apifonis got every single copy of *Torah* burnt. Until no copy of it was left.[342]

The same happened to *Bible* (New Testament) so the original transcriptions became extinct as a result of the attacks of Titus of Rome, Emperor Nero, Domician, Deuclacian. But so far as the Qurān is concerned it had to face hundreds of marauderrs, on many occasions there was a general massacre of Muslims, their libraries were burnt and huge collections of their ancient books were thrown in the river, the entire Islamic world, was subjected to the onslaughts of Karmathians who did everything in their power to interpolate in the Qurān. But as promised by Allah, this Book has not only remained safe without any change but its propagation and circulation keeps on increasing in East and West alike . Supposedly, if all the written copies of the Qurān were to disappear even now there are hundreds of thousands of Muslims who are holding it as a sacred trust within their hearts. If anyone tried to change a single word in it even small children would find it out.

Furthermore, not only the words but also the meanings of the Qurān have been safeguarded in a manner that in itself has a history of its own. With the passage of time

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341: Encyclopaedia Britanicca v3, p501, 1950. Bible.
342: Bible Nox version, Macmillan, London 1963.

meanings of words of every language keep on changing. Thus it was that languages like Hebrew, Kaladani in which previous Divine scriptures were revealed, either totally disappeared or such drastic changes occurred in them that they were transformed into entirely new languages.

But Allah has conferred the distinction on the language of the Qurān notwithstanding the thousands of changes and revolutions in the world it remains fully preserved. If anyone wants to know in what sense a certain word of the Qurān was used in those times he could easily find it.

We can guage from this incident how Arabic was preserved. There were two mountains by the name of Akkād over the city Zaraib in Yemen. The inhabitatns of the mountain had vowed that they would have no relationship with outside people. They would not marry any outsider, have no friendship with them and will not travel beyond their mountains. If anyone travels to their place, he will not be allowed to stay more than three days. They placed these restrictions to prevent a corruption of their Arabic language. Historians have said that they are the only people whose Arabic language is in its original form and has, undergone not the slightest change whatsoever.[343]

In short, the truth of Allah's promise is becoming increasingly manifest with the passage of time that this Book will ever remain safe and He Himself would safeguard it. This prior communication has proved to be perfectly correct.

We do not intend here to describe all the prophecies of the Qurān but only a few of them. Even these few examples clearly denote that prophécies made by the Qurān

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343: Mu'ajjam Al-Buldān, Yaqūt Al-Ḥamawī v4, p.143, Part.14, Dar Sadīr, Beirut 1376 AH. Under root word عكرتان and Taj-ul-Urūs Zebaydī under root word عكه.

have been fulfilled in such a miraculous manner that no human effort was involved in them.

## DISCLOSURES OF THE QURĀN

Apart from the prophecies, the Qurān has also pointed out many scientific and historical facts which were not only unknown at that time but could not even be imagined. It will form an exclusive book if all such verses of the Qurān are collected together and explained in detail. In these pages it is not possible to compile them all, but a few examples are being given below.

1: The Qurān has stated that as Fir'aun (Pharaoh) was drowning in the sea he confessed Faith orally just to save his life. In response Allah said

آٰلْئٰنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ○ فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيْكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ اٰيَةً

What! Now! And indeed before this you did rebel, and were of the corrupters! So this day We shall rescue you with your body that you may be a sign to those who come after you. (Surah Yunus 10:91-92)

At the time of revelation of this verse, and even centuries afterwards, nobody knew that the body of Fir'aun is still preserved, but it has been discovered only recently and is preserved in the museum of Cairo.

2: The Qurān has stated

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ○

And of everything We have created pairs that you may be admonished. (Az-Zāriyāt, 51:49)

When this verse was revealed the general conception was that male and female pairs existed only among human

beings and animals or in some vegetations. But with the advancement of science the Qurānic reality is becoming manifest that male and female pairs exist in everything. It is a different matter that somewhere they are termed as male and female and somewhere as positive and negative or as electron and proton, or neutron and positron. In another verse the Qurān has also clarified that the occurrence in pairs in many other things is still not known to people. It says,

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ○

Glorified be He Who created pairs of all things which the earth grows and of themselves, and of that which they know not.

(Suah Yāsīn, 36:36)

## TRUTH OF THE QURĀN AND NON-MUSLIM AUTHORS OF THE WEST

There was a time when the Western authors, motivated by deep Christian bigotry used to say openly that the Qurān was authored by Muḥammad ﷺ himself and that his claim of Messengership was self-conceived. But now the non-Muslim Western authors themselves admit that this claim by the earlier Westerners was based on prejudice and not supported by any proofs or arguments, and the whole life of the Prophet ﷺ belied their accusations. The renowned Orientalist of the present times Montgomery Watts has written that this was a common conception in medieval Europe that Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ (God forbid) was an imposter, who falsely proclaimed that he received revelations from Allah, but these concepts of the medieval ages were a sort of war

propaganda and are now gradually fading away from the minds of the Europeans and Christian world.[344]

Professor Watt is perfectly right in saying that the false accusation against the Prophet was not based on any academic argument but in fact it was a part of propaganda which was considered necessary in the fight against the Muslims. He has refuted in detail those earlier Europeans who used to accuse the Prophet ﷺ of making false claims or of being afflicted with insanity or some disease, and says that in view of clear proofs the present day scholars do not endorse these accusations. Summing up, he writes that this misconception about Muḥammad should now be dropped from the topic of discussion, and Muḥammad should be considered as a man who proclaimed with full sincerity and honesty the Messages about whom he believed that those were sent to him from God.[345]

After this admission, justice demanded that the Prophethood and Messengership of Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ should have been accepted, but the centuries old misconceptions are not easily erased from the mind. Hence Watt and other authors of the present time admit on the one side that the Prophet ﷺ was sincere in his claim of Messengership, but on the other side it is difficult for them to give up their own religion openly and accept Islam. Hence, in order to find a midway they have invented a very strange explanation of Prophet Sayyidina Muḥammad's ﷺ claim for Prophethood.

They say that the revelations received by him were not anything extraneous but (God forbid) it was a state within himself which had resulted from a prolonged thinking and observations and to which he sincerely believed to be the voice of Allah or an angel. He was

344: Watt: Bells Introduction to the Qurān Ch.2p-17.
345: Watt. Bells Introduction to the Qurān Ch. 2, p 18.

disgusted with the beliefs and customs of his people from the earliest days of his life, and that is why he used to meditate in isolation rather than follow their way of worship. For this purpose he started to spend several days at a time in the cave of Ḥira and as a result of prolonged meditation his belief in the Unity of Allah became firm, and also the urge to invite his people to his belief and rid them of idolatry. In secluded atmosphere of the cave with no one to talk to this idea was so deeply ingrained on his mind that he began to feel his own inner voice as an extraneous voice, and taking it as the voice of Allah or an angel he very sincerely and honestly proclaimed himself to be the Prophet.

This is the explanation about the Prophet's claim to Messengership that is now popular among "Western Intellectuals". Not one or two but scores of "Researchers" among the Orientalists believe in it, so much so that even some of those who profess to be Muslims seem to be impressed with this view. But a little thought over it will make it clear that their motivation behind this explanation is nothing but the fact that these "intellectuals" have already decided that they will not affirm Messengership of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ no matter how convincing may be the proofs for it, and no matter how far-fetched, absurd and impossible explanations they may have to advance to refute it. The fact is that the explanaiton of the *Waḥy* recvealed on Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ given by Professor Watt and other Orientalists in the present age is such that one feels shy of treating it worthy of an academic and intellectual reply. However, the following facts may be kept in view.

1: Can it be conceived that the Prophet, about whom they themselves admit that he was endowed with the highest intellectual and practical abilities, could have mistaken

his own subjective state as a voice from an angel for twentythree years and could never understand the reality of this extraordinary phenomenon? *Waḥy* did not come to him only once or twice, but it continued for hundreds or probably thousands of times during these 23 years. Did he suffer from this delusion throughout this whole period?

2: Moreover, if he experienced this so-called "Subjective State" on account of the deplorable state of his people, condemnation of their heresies and assertion of the belief in oneness of God ought to have been the first things to have been done as a result of this experience. But we find that the first revelation neither refuted disbelief and idolatry nor preached Unity of Allah, nor did it contain any of his basic teachings. On the contrary, the revelation was:

اِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ ○ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ○ اِقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ○ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ○ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ○

Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. Created man from a blood-clot. Read: and your Lord is the Most Bountiful Who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not. (Al-'Alaq. 96:1-5)

3: It is inexplicable that after coming into play only once this "Subjective State" is extinguished and for three years he hears nothings of it. During this period he remains anxious due to the disconnection of *Waḥy*. Then, after three years, "*Waḥy*" is revealed again but still it carries no categorical refutation of idolatry nor does it mention anything about the misdeeds of the Arabs. The question arises that if this state had

occurred due to his meditation about the heretical life of his people and his being filled with the concept of Unity of Allah why these "delusions" find no mention in the very early stages of *Waḥy* and why did the predominant influence of this state convey him no message for three years?

4: If it was a "Subjective State" it should have been in full conformity with the thoughts of the Prophet ﷺ but at many places in the Qurān advice has been given against his personal views, and at some places his personal views have actually been refuted alongwith a mild admonition for example:

لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ

It is none of your concern (O Prophet) in the matter, whether He relents towards them or chastises them.

(Al-'Imrān, 3:128)

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّى يُثْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

It is not for a Prophet to have captives unless he has given (the enemy) a sound thrashing in the land.

(Al-Anfāl, 8:67)

عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ○

Allah forgive you (O Prophet) why did you permit them (to stay behind) till it had become clear to you which of them spoke the truth and you had known the liars.

(At-Tawbah: 9:43)

5: Even if it is conceded that the over-powering grip of an idea is felt like an "Extraneous voice", how is it that the prophesies made by this Extraneous Voice always

came true, whatever commands given it gave ultimately proved to be correct and whatever words it spoke should prove to be the ultimate truths which all the scholars and orators of the world could not contest, until it brings about a sweeping revolution in the Arabian peninsula the like of which the world has never seen.

6: If it is accepted that the "voice" resulting from a gripping imagination has some reality then obviously it must be a reflection of the knowledge and thoughts of the person who hears it and anything that is not already in his knowledge and thoughts cannot be known to him through this "Voice' But just turn the pages of the Qurān and you will come to know that there are innumerable things in it of which the Prophet ﷺ had no previous knowledge, and it was "*Waḥy*" that imparted this knowledge to him for the first time, for example the following verse.

مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِيْ مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُوْرًا نَّهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

You knew not what the Book w.s, nor the Faith, but We have made this (Qurān) a Light whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants. (Ash-Shūra, 42:52)

7: Particularly, there are the events concerning the ancient peoples about whom the Qurān has clarified and factually also it is undeniable that before the coming down of *Waḥy* the Prophet ﷺ was not aware of them. The Qurān imparted this knowledge to him for the first time. For example, after describing the incident about Sayyidina Nūḥ ﷺ in Sūrah Hūd the Qurān says,

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَآ إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ أَنْتَ

وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا

That is of the tidings of the unseen which We reveal to you (O Prophet) you did not know it, nor (knew) your people before this. (Surah Hūd, 11:49)

And also,

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوٓا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُوْنَ ○

That is of the tidings of the unseen that We reveal to you (O Muhammad). You were not with them when they (Yūsuf's brothers) agreed upon their plan, while they were devising . (Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:102)

Montgomery Watt and his like-minded admit that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never told a lie, and "Not a finger can be raised on the integerity and character of Muḥammad."[346]

Hence, even according to them no mis-statement was possible in any verse of the Qurān. The question now arises that if this "*Waḥy*" was not an extraneous source of knowledge how did he know the facts about earlier Prophets عليهم السلام of which he had no prior knowledge?

8: Here we have mentioned only those things which even an ordinary person can easily understand and which become clear even with a cursory reading of the Qurān. If the Traditions that describe the state of descent of "*Waḥy*" and its earlier incidents are also kept in view, the purely imaginary interpretations of Watt and others stand automatically nullified. Some of those traditions have been described under the caption of "History of descent of *Waḥy*."

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346: Watt: Bell's Introduction to the Qurān ch:2 p25.

## HOLY PROPHET ﷺ AND THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

In order to prove that the "*Waḥy*" (Divine Revelation) received by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was in fact his own "Intrinsic state" created as a result of predominance of imagination some Western authors have stressed that he was aware of the affairs of the earlier peoples and the same events were related by him in his "Specific State".

They say that he had heard the facts about previous nations from the Jews and Christians of Arabia. In this connection two hermits Buḥaira and Nasṭura are specifically named.[347] The Prophet's ﷺ meeting with them during his journey to Syria is mentioned in different books of biography and history. Some western authors have expressed the view that these hermits belonged to Aryusi sect who were Unitarians, and (God forbid) he imbibed the concept of Unity of God from them, and also acquired from them the knowledge of previous books and the affairs of earlier nations.

Even a man with ordinary understanding possessing an iota of respect for justice and fairplay, will not believe that in the short and accidental meeting with the Prophet during his journey to Syria these hermits would have poured out before him all the knowledge they had within their hearts, and that, he absorbed it all overnight and through it founded a revolutionary Faith and religion. To begin with, the very assertion that Buhaira and Nastura belonged to Aryusi is utterly baseless and false. This is not supported even by the weakest records. And no wonder. Because Aryusis were declared innovators and heretic as early as the fourth century C.E. and even any mention of this Aryusi

347: Rodwell's English translation of the Qurān, preface p.8. London 1953.

was declared to be a punishable offence.

Athanasius and his followers had left no stone unturned to stamp out this sect. How would this unfortunate clan survive till the 7th century C.E. Could their remnants, supposing any of them were left, be in a position to become the head of a monastery in a city like Baṣra?

Secondly, the same reports which mention that during his Syrian journey the Prophet ﷺ met these hermits also say that it was a very short, fleeting and off chance meeting in which there could be no room for any learning or education. It is really strange that the people who can believe in such absurdities find it difficult to accept the fact of the descent of *Waḥy* (Divine Revelation) on the Prophet ﷺ.

Below we produce the most detailed report on the Prophet's meeting with Buḥeera, that would clarify the reality behind this meeting.

Abu Mūsa Ash'arī has been reported in Jām'e Tirmizī to have stated that once Abu Ṭālib (uncle of the Prophet) went to Syria with some other chiefs of Quraysh. There was a hermit living at the place where they stayed in Syria. They used to pass by even before but he had never paid any heed to them, but against his wont this time he came out of his hermitage and looked at each of them in a searching manner until he held the hand of Muḥammad ﷺ, and said,

هٰذا سيد العالمين، هذا رسول رب العالمين ، يبعثه اللّٰه رحمة للعالمين ـ

> He it is who is the leader of all the worlds, he it is who is the Messenger of the Lord of all the worlds, whom Allah will send as a Mercy for all the worlds.

The chieftains of Quraysh asked him how did he know that? The hermit said that there was not a tree or rock that

did not prostrate before him when they had come out of the valley, and trees and rocks prostrate only before a Messenger of Allah. He further said that the Prophet was also bearing the apple-shaped seal of Prophethood under his shoulder and with that also he recognised him.

The hermit then went back and arranged food for the entire caravan. When all were seated for the feast, Muḥammad ﷺ was not among them. The hermit asked where was he? He was told that he had taken the camels for grazing. A man was sent for him and when he came a cloud was casting its shadow on him. When he joined his people all of them had already taken seats under the shade of a tree and no shady spot was left. He sat down on one side and instantly the shadow of the tree hovered over him. The hermit exclaimed, "Look! How the tree's shadow has bent over him". He then stood up and said to the Quraysh, "Do not take him towards Rome. If the Romans saw him they will know him by his qualities and signs and kill him". While the hermit was talking he saw seven Romans coming towards him as if searching for some one. The hermit asked them what they were upto. The Romans said they were looking for the Prophet (whose tidings are present in *Torah* and *Injīl*) and who was about to come out on a journey in the same month as it was, and that the Romans are looking for him everywhere. The hermit then asked them if it was possible for anybody to stop anything destined by God. They said, "No" Then these vowed before the hermit Bah-ira that they would no longer pursue the Prophet, and stayed with him. The hermit then asked the Quraysh on oath as to who was the custodian of Muḥammad? People told him that it was Abu Ṭālib. The hermit then persistently implored Abu Ṭālib to send Muḥammad

back until he did so.[348] Some of the Ulama have questioned the authenticity of this report.[349] But even if it is correct, one does not find, even with microscopic view, any clue that the Prophet could have learnt anything from Bah-ira. It was a very short meeting which did not extend to more than a few hours and then it took place a time when his age was just twelve or thirteen years.[350] Can anybody in his proper senses believe that at this tender age a meeting lasting only for a few hours would have imparted to the Prophet ﷺ such a deep knowledge of the affairs of earlier nations that would enable him to challenge the people of the Book and expose the interpolations in their Books and point out mistakes in them?

The description of the Prophet's meeting with hermit Nasṭura is even more sketchy than that with Bah-irā. And if anybody says on this basis that the Prophet had acquired knowledge for the people of the Book, it cannot be explained as anything bigotry and animus against Islam.

But the point to ponder is that if the Holy Prophet ﷺ had learnt about these events from some people of the Book, why the idolaters of Makkah, who would go to extremes of exaggeration to refute him, remained silent on this matter? Why did they not charge that he was taught these things by so and so persons. It is the limit that the idolaters widely publicised that a certain blacksmith of Makkah was the teacher of Muḥammad ﷺ and just because the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to stop at his place for a few moments.

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348: Tirmizi. Abwāb al-Manāqib v2, p225 Qurān Maḥal Karachi.

349: Ḥāfiẓ Zahbī among them but Hafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and others have termed it an authentic tradition.

350: There are three versions. One places his age at 9 years another at 13 but the most agreed one at 12 years.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ ط لِسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ ○

And certainly We know that they say "Only a mortal teaches him". The speech of him whom they allude to is foreign, and this (Qurān) is speech Arabic, manifest.

(An-Nahl, 16:103)

But none of them ever raised the objection that he had gained all that knowledge from Bah-irā, Nasṭurā or Waraqah bin Naufal. It makes it clear that this is an absurd objection that even the bitterest contemporary opponents of the Prophet did not like to even mention it.

# SOME OBJECTIONS ON THE QURĀN

Some Orientalists have raised objections on certain facts mentioned by the Qurān and have tried to impress that the Prophet ﷺ had heard about them from some scholars belonging to the People of the Book and erred while describing them. For example:

## THE NAME OF MARYAM'S (MARY'S) FATHER

Encyclopaedia Britannica has raised an objection that Maryam was the name of Sayyidina Musa's ﷺ sister and also of the mother of Sayyidina Isa ﷺ. The former was the daughter of 'Imran and the Qurān (God forbid) confusing the two of them described the latter also as "Daughter of Imran".[351] It is too disgraceful that even such a universally hailed authority as the Encyclopaedia Britannica should have no qualms in giving place in it to such an utterly baseless objection. Had the author been able to establish through some definite proof that 'Imrān was not the name of Maryam's father, there might have been some weight in the objection. But the fact is that if they were asked, "What else was the name of the father of Maryam other than 'Imrān?" they would have nothing to say. And what beats it all is the fact that even the Bible does not mention her father's name. Even in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, under the chapter Maryam it has been admitted that "there does not exist any record in the historical documents of the first century C.E.

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351: Encyclopaedia Britannica v13. p483 (Qurān).

about the parents of Maryam".[352] How strange it is that on one side is the ignorance and on the other side is the claim that Maryam's name mentioned in the Qurān was fallacious. Do the authors of Britannica think that if one man is named 'Imrān, all rights get reserved for that particular person and no one else by that name would come into being in future? In fact this only serves as a proof of the Truth of the Qurān that openly unveils those historical facts which were not known to people for seven hundred years. The Qurān has done it with such a bold and confident style that even its most bitter enemies could not dare to prove it wrong for fourteen hundred years.

Further, it is not confined to the name of the father of Maryam but all "authentic" Christian sources are silent on the topics of her birth, upbringing, childhood and early life, so much so that there is no mention about these things in any of the four versions of the Bibles. It was the Qurān that for the first time, revealed these facts to all people. In the beginning the Christian world objected to these "disclosures" too but now those ancient books on Christanity are being discovered in which the incidents are mentioned as they exist in the Qurān.[353] How surprising it is that despite such manifest disclosures of the Qurān these "Intellectuals" raised objections on the Qurān that the name of the Maryam's father is not found in any Christian sources?

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352: Britannica v14, p999 (Maryam).
353: Dictionary of the Bible by Hastings v3,p288.

## HĀMĀN, THE MINISTER OF FIR'AUN (PHAROAH)

In the article "Qurān" of Encyclopaedia Britannica another objection has been raised that the Qurān has mentioned Hāmān as the name of one of the ministers of Fir'aun (Pharoah) while no minister by that name occurs in the Old Testament of the Bible. The author has expressed the view that in fact Hāmān was the minister of King Esvirus whose name is mentioned in the Bible, and Muhammad confused him with the minister of Fir'aun.[354]

This is also a thing with no head and tail and is based on the childish assumption that no two persons of one name can exist in the world. Further, the fact is that the story of so-called minister of Esvirus mentioned by the writer of this article in Britannica exists only in a doubtful book Apocryphal Book of Bible Esther of the Old Testament. This book is not regarded as reliable by the Protestants and hence it does not occur in the existing Protestant Bibles. However, the Catholics regard it as authentic as Hāmān or Āmān[355] was not the minister of king Esvirus but his chief courtier[356] and the story written in that book does not have even a distant relation with that of the Qurān. The Qurān states that Fir'aun had ordered Hāmān to build a high palace for him so that he could peep into Sayyidina Musa's ﷺ God. The Qurān further states that Hāmān remained the arrogant minister of Fir'aun till the end and was ultimately drowned with him. Contrary to this, there is no such story attributed to Hāmān (or Āmān) in the Book Esther. Haman of this book belongs to the time of the

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354: Britannica v13 p.483 (Qurān).

355: In some of the books his name is written as Hāmān, and in other as Āmāns.

356: Esther. 3:1.

incident of Bakht Naṣ-ar, and the story only is that due to an accidental situation he gained proximity to King Esvirus but shortly afterward he ordered mass killing of the Jews. The Jewish wife of the King became his enemy and ultimately he was hanged by the King and in his place a Jew caller Murdeke was nominated.[357]

Anybody who has studied the book of Esther even in a cursory manner can fully realise that the story of this book does not have even a distant relation to the Qurānic story. If the Prophet ﷺ had confused Hāmān of the Qurān with Hāmān of Esther there should have been some resemblance somewhere between the two stories. The story as described by the Qurān does not occur in Esther or any other book of the Bible, and the story of Esther not only does not exist anywhere in the Qurān but is also not found in several hundred thousands of traditions to indicate that this had ever come to his knowledge. It is all the more surprising that it is only the Qurān that the present day Christian and Jew Orientalists accuse of confusing two people bearing the same name. They are never concerned with hundreds of such cases found in the Bible.

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357: See Esther 3:1, 8 and 8: and 7:6, 10 and 8:12 (Nox version Macmillan Press London, 1963).

CHAPTER-8

# SUBJECTS OF THE QURĀN[358]

When we pay a close attention to the subjects of the Qurān we find that they are divided under four major headings, and every verse of the Qurān can be placed under any one of the four headings.

1: Beliefs.
2: Commandments.
3: Stories.
4: Examples or Parables.

## BELIEFS (ASSENTING ASPECT)

In the Qurān, three fundamental beliefs have been brought out: Oneness, Messengership and Hereafter.

*Tawhīd* or Oneness means that man should believe that every particle of this universe is the creation of One Being He should worship the same Being, love Him fear Him beseech Him and have firm faith that every particle of the universe is His possession and nobody else can alter it without Divine guidance.

Belief in Messengership means that man should accept Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the prophets عليهم السلام before him as true Messengers of Allah, He should confirm

358: The author had written this article in 1383 AH. eleven years before this book was published. It was also published then in Bayyināt (the monthly journal). It is now included here with some changes and additions.

whatever the Prophets say.

Belief in the Hereafter means that man should believe in such a life after death that will be eternal, and in it everyone will be rewarded against the deeds done in the worldly life. If he had done good he will deserve the blissful blessings of Paradise, and if he had wasted his worldly life in evil deeds he would be destined for eternal doom of the Hell.

In order to prove these three beliefs the Qurān has given different kinds of arguments. By way of reasoning there are four kinds of arguments. To prove a thing a man either cites an authority that his opponent also respects. This is known as *Recorded argument*. Or he tries to prove it in a logical manner and this is known as *Logical argument*. Or he shows such evidences as persuade his opponent to draw the same conclusion as he has drawn himself and this is known as *Observational argument*. Or, he invites attention towards previous happenings to prove his point of view and show that people succeeded or failed depending on whether they heeded the advice or not. This type of argument is known as Experimental or Empirical argument. Or, he invites attention towards previous happenings to prove his point of view and show that people succeeded or failed depending on whether they heeded the advice or not.This type of argument is known as Experimental or Empirical argument

In the Qurān each of these arguments is present and in this way the three fundamental beliefs are fully supported with arguments. Examples of these are given below;

## RECORDED ARGUMENTS

To prove the Messengership of Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ Allah has stated:

وَإِنَّهُ لَفِي زُبُرِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ○

"And surely it is (mentioned) in the scriptures of the ancients". (Ash-Shu'arā, 26:196)

In this verse Allah has addressed the disbelievers saying that while they reject the Messenger of Allah, their Books (Torah and Injeel) although they are interpolated still contain tidings of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

This is a reference to the prophecies and tidings about

him in the previous divine scriptures. For example it occurs in Bible.

> "He came from Sinai, and rose on them from Sha'īr[359] and shone his lights from the mountain of Fārān. He came with ten thousand pious persons and in his right hand was a fiery code of life for them." (Deutronomy, Chapter 33)

Obviously, no Prophet other than Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ coming after those who followed Sayyidina Mūsa ﷺ appeared from the mountains of Fārān and Shā'īr and ten tousand pious men[360] appear to be his Companions because their number at the time of conquerst of Makkah was the same.

Sayyidina Isa ﷺ is quoted in the Injīl to have said:

> But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you in all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear (from God) that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. (John 12:15)

## LOGICAL ARGUMENTS

There are many kinds of Logical arguments and almost each of them is present in the Qurān. The first and most widely accepted kind is that conventionally known as *Qiyās Iqtiranī* . A rule is generally described and logical conclusion drawn from that premise. The Qurān contains many such examples. In *Surah Ṭā Hā* it is stated that Sayyidina Mūsa ﷺ felt some fear when he saw the ropes and sticks of the magicians turn into moving snakes. Allah comforted him with the following words:

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359: The name of a mountain near Madinah, and Fārān is a famous mountain of Makkah it is now known as Jabal-Nūr.

360: In the 1958 Edition of Bible the words "ten thousand" have been changed to "hundred of thousands".

إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدُ سَاحِرٍ ۖ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ ○

They have only wrought the guile of a sorcerer and a sorcerer prospers not wheresoever he comes from.

(Tā Ha, 20:69)

This is an example of Promiximal Hypothesis. The conclusion is drawn from a minor premise and a major premise. It tells as that (1) a sorcerer will not prosper and (2) from wherever he comes.

Besides there are a large number of such examples in the Qurān in which one component is dropped. For example, the unbelievers used to say how was it possible for a person to be brought back to life on the Day of Judgement when his bones had turned into ash after his death. Allah states that this is definitely possible because

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ ○

Yea We are are able to restore his very fingertipes.

(Al-Qiyāmah, 75:4)

a) While there is, in this example, a minor premise, no major premise is presented and the final conclusion is not mentioned. It means that He who can restore even the phalanges of fingers, will logically restore decayed bones as well. Restoration of the fingers is much more difficult because the marks and lines on them are an amazing example of Allah's power and wisdom, the lines on one person's fingers do not match with any other person's. We may see a trillion examples. That is why the finger impressions have been regarded as an alternative to the signature of a person since ancient times, and even today the rule is held in all courts of Law and governmental procedures. Hence the Being Who can restore the complex and delicate can bring the

bones back to life. Therefore it is wrong to deny the Day of Resurrection.

b) The second kind of Logical argument is "Exceptional Hypothesis". This argument is presented generally to negate something. It has two components. That which is to be negated is the first form and is dependent on something else. In the second form that which is negated is placed. For example, if I want to prove that it is not daytime I would say, "If it was daytime, the sun should have been there, but since the sun is not there, it is not day time". There are many such arguments in the Qurān. For example, to deny polytheism and affirm Unity, it states

لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ۝

If there were in them (the heaven and the earth) other Gods besides Allah, certainly they would both go to ruin.[361] (Al-Anbiya, 21:22)

Here too the hint is there but the conclusion is understood without being stated, that is "but the two of them were not discorded." Thus we know that there is no God other than Allah in the earth and the heavens.

c) The third kind of Logical argument is known as "*As-Sabr wat-Taqsīm*" (Probing) through which the opponent's claim can be disproved. In this the opponent is told that his claim can be proved only if any of the several possibilities is found, and since none is present his claim is wrong. For example, the opponent claims that Mr. X is a member of Pakistan

361: If there were gods besides One Allah, they would have differed in their decisions.

Assembly. He would then be told that to be called a member of Pakistan Assembly it is necessary that he should be a member of National Assembly or of one of the Provincial Assemblies and since he is not a member of any of them he cannot be called a member of Pakistan Assembly.

Very clear example of this type of argument is present in the Qurān. The pagans sometimes used to prohibit male animals and sometimes female animals to themselves although they were permissible. Allah has refuted them by asking them the cause of their action. There could only be four reasons of prohibition, due to their being males, or due to being females, or due to something in the womb where they were created, that makes it prohibitory, or just because Allah has forbidden it. But all these four things are not applicable, because they did not prohibit only males but sometimes females as well, so neither the male nor the female can be the cause. The womb can also not be taken as cause, because in that case both males and females should have been forbidden together but they forbade only male or female at a time. They also did not forbid it in submission to the will of Allah because Allah did not give any such command. Allah said,

وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ
الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنْثَيَيْنِ ۖ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ
إِذْ وَصَّاكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا
لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ○

"And of the camels (He has created) a twain, and of the cows a twain. Say (O Prophet)," Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females? Or what the womb of

two females contain? Were you witnesses when Allah enjoined you with this?" (Al-An'ām, 6:144)

Here Almighty Allah has refuted their evil theory 'as *Şabr wat-Taqsīm*.'

The fourth important subdivision of Logical Argument is the "*Acceptance*" approach. Here, it is argued with the opponent that his claim would not hold even if his conditions are accepted. The pagans used to say why an angel was not sent as a Messenger instead of a human being? This has been replied in the Qurān in several ways, for example,

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا

And had We made an angel (our Messenger), We would surely have made him as a man. (Al-Anām, 6:9)

That is, in the first place it is not necessary for the Messenger to be an angel, rather it is better that the Messenger should be a man. If we did send an angel for this purpose your object would not have been served because you cannot stand the sight of an angel in his original shape. Hence he would have to be sent in the shape of a human being, and you would have rejected him.

e) "*Diversion*" is another form of logical argument. In a logical debate it sometimes happens that the debater brings forward an argument but his opponent raises an objection to it. Then, he gives another argument rather than reply to the objection. This does not mean that his first argument was wrong, but that the objection is based on stupidity and, therefore, another argument is being given. This method is known as "*Diversion*."

In the Qurān, there is an example of it in the incident of Sayyidina Ibrāhīm ﷺ. He had to convince Nimrūd and advanced an argument for the existence of Allah and

> Assembly. He would then be told that to be called a member of Pakistan Assembly it is necessary that he should be a member of National Assembly or of one of the Provincial Assemblies and since he is not a member of any of them he cannot be called a member of Pakistan Assembly.

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"And of the camels (He has created) a twain, and of the cows a twain. Say (O Prophet)," Is it the two males He has forbidden or the two females? Or what the womb of

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His Unity

رَبِّيَ الَّذِيْ يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ ۔

My Lord is One who gives life and causes death".

On this Nimrūd got hold of an innocent person and had him killed. Then, he released a person who was sentenced to death, and said

اَنَا اُحْيِيْ وَاُمِيْتُ ۔

I also give life and cause death. (Al-Baqarah, 2:258)

Sayyidina Ibrāhīm عليه السلام understood that the stupid person did not understand the actual meaning of giving life and causing death, hence he immediately presented another argument which silenced Nimrūd. He said,

فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْتِيْ بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ

Surely, Allah brings the sun from the east so you bring it from the west. (Al-Baqarah, 2:258)

This was a "*Diversion*" which silenced Nimrūd.

فَبُهِتَ الَّذِيْ كَفَرَ

Thereupon he, who disbelieved was confounded.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:258)

## OBSERVATIONAL ARGUMENTS

This kind of argument pertains to "*Observation*". The Qurān has used this type of argument more than the others because logical and philosophical argument may silence a person but sometimes it does not appeal to the heart, and does not offer a cure to the sufferer of doubts. The Qurān does not intend to silence anyone but it aims at letting the truth penetrate into the heart. Also, logical, arguments are useful for a

particular group of people, and every illiterate and ignorant person cannot benefit from them. But "*Observation*" is so evident that even an illiterate villager cannot resist saying,

البعرة تدل على البعير والاثر على المسير فسماء ذات ابراج

وارض ذات فجاج كيف لا تدل على اللطيف الخبير۔

When the excreta on the wayside point to a camel and the foot print to wayfarers, why the sky of domes and the earth of caves cannot point to the Subtle and All-Knowing Creator.

Allah has presented most of the Observational arguments each time with a new grandeur and style. Here is an example where arguments for Unity of Allah have been advanced.

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا ءَإِلَٰهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَعْدِلُونَ ۝ أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ۗ ءَإِلَٰهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ءَإِلَٰهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝ أَمَّنْ يَهْدِيكُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَنْ يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ءَإِلَٰهٌ مَعَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۝

Or, who has created the heavens and the earth, and sends down water for you from the heaven? So, with it

> We cause to grow orchards of delight — it is not possible for you to cause the trees to grow thereof. Is there a God with Allah? Nay, they are a people who deviate (from the right path!). Or who had made the earth a fixed abode, and placed rivers in its midst, and placed thereon firm mountains and placed a barrier between two seas? Is there a God with Allah? Nay, most of the them know not! Or who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and relieves his suffering, and makes you to be successors in the earth? Is there a god with Allah? (But) little you are admonished. Or, who guides you through the depths of darkness on land and sea, and who sends the wind as heralds of glad tidings, before His mercy? Is there a god with Allah? Exalted be Allah above what they associate (with Him). (An-Naml, 27:60-63)

The Being Who is doing such important works and there is none else who can do them must be the One worthy of worship, and associating anyone else with Him will be utmost stupidity. Just think that the Being Who can alone do such great works, why should He be in need of an associate for minor works? These verses tell us that the Being Who does these important things which none else can do is surely entitled to be worshipped. To associate any other with Him is the worst form of absurdity. We must also ask ourselves how can He Who does all this need a partner to do minor things?[362]

It is also stated in support of the Hereafter.

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362: The unbeblieves of Arabia knew that Allah has created the earth and heaven and does all the things described in the above verses but they supposed that He has appointed the kings of the world as His helpers in the administration of these tasks.

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوٓا إِلَى السَّمَآءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ ۝ وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ۝ تَبْصِرَةً وَذِكْرَىٰ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُنِيبٍ ۝ وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ۝ وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ۝ رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا كَذَٰلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ۝

Have they not beheld the heaven above them, how We have built it, and adorned it, and it has no cracks? And the earth, We have spread it out and cast on it firm mountains, and We caused to grow therein of every lovely kind (of vegetation), for an insight and an admonition to every penitent servant. And We send down from the heaven blessed water, then We cause to grow thereby gardens and grain of harvest, and tall date-palms having ranged cluster, a sustenance for the servants, and thereby We revive a dead land. Thus, will be the coming forth (from the earth). (Surah Qaf, 50:5-11)

In the Qurān things described in connection with human body and soul, realities of the universe, astronomy, vegetation and geophysics, mostly follow this line of arguments. And where the emphasis is on pondering over the universe the intention is that the man should thereby develop an understanding and conception of the limitless power of its Creator. He may prostrate himself before Him alone. Accordingly, the Qurān has unveiled many scientific realities. But all such things must be seen in the whole context of the Qurān otherwise to think of it as a book of Science will create many misunderstandings.

## EXPERIMENTAL ARGUMENTS

The Qurān has invited attention to the experiences of the previous nations. Hence it has stated at various places.

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا
أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَٰكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ○

"Have they not travelled in the land and seen how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than these in might, and they filled the land and built upon it more than these have built. And their Messengers came to them with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty). So it was not Allah Who wronged them, but they used to wrong themselves." (Ar-Rum, 30:9)

and

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيشَتَهَا فَتِلْكَ مَسَاكِنُهُمْ لَمْ
تُسْكَن مِّن بَعْدِهِمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ ○

And how many a township have We destroyed, that exulted in its (easy) way of living! So those are their dwelling places: they have not been inhabited after them except a little. And We are ever the Inheritors!" (Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:58)

The purpose of narrating these experiences is to sound a note of caution that those people who had fashioned their lives on a wrong footing turning away from the light of guidance were ever pushed by Allah into deep caverns from where they could never come out.

## BELIEFS (NEGATING ASPECT)

In addition to proving the above mentioned beliefs, the Qurān has negated many of the wrong beliefs and actions, and given satisfactory answers to different doubts harboured by poeple. In the terminology of the principles of Tafsīr the Verses of the Qurān that treat this subject are called Āyāt Mukhāṣamah (The Negating verses)

In this type of verses four kinds of astray poeple have been opposed and negated:

1. Polytheist idolaters
2. Christians
3. Jews
4. Hypocrites.

## POLYTHEIST IDOLATERS

The heathen Arabs were involved in any of the five wrong ways

1. *Associating others with Allah.* They used to ascribe partnership of idols with Allah in certain of His specific Excellences. Their belief was that although Allah was the Creator of everything yet, like the emperors of this world who entrust other poeple with administration, He too has delegated certain powers to others. He keeps control of the Universe but He has entrusted matters of subsistence etc. to the idols, and does not interfere in their affairs. Hence, request relating to these departments should be made to the idols. The idols should be worshipped to gain their pleasure that they recommend their worshippers to Allah. The Qurān has described their belief in the follwing words:

مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ

We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah. (Az-Zumar:3)

Idol worship under this pretext was originated by a man named Amr bin Luhayy and it spread day by day, so they

were worshipping 360 idols at the time of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The Qurān has rejected their behaviour in different manners. Sometimes it has asked them to support their blind conduct with proof. It has proved that Allah has authority over everything. He brings into existence merely by intending to do so. Then, why should He need the assistance of others in the administration of His Kingdom. The verse quoted above denotes this very fact. Sometimes, He draws their attention to the stone that lay under the footsteps but suddenly becomes a god after being beaten and carved out by chisel and hammer. Just by being given the names Lāt or Hubal they cannot become the cherisher or sustainer of people.

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ

These are naught but names which you have named, you and your fathers: Allah has sent no authority concerning them. (An-Najm, 53:23)

2: *Similitude:* The second wrong the idolaters indulged in was their comparison of Allah to themselves. Hence they said that He had a body and family and they described the angels as His daughters. The Qurān has refuted it in two ways. First, by a clear denial that Allah has children.

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ○

He begets not, nor was He begotten. (Al-Ikhlāṣ, 112:3)

Secondly, by denying in particular that He has daughters. They were told that they should think over it that while they consider it a shame and ignominy for themselves to have daughters, they assert that the Being

who is Authority over the universe has daughters for Himself.

أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمُ الْبَنُونَ ۝

Or, has He daughters while you have sons?
(At-Ṭūr, 52:39)

مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ۝

What is the matter with you? How do you judge?
(Al-Qalam, 68:36)

3: *Interpolation*: This was the third kind of wrong that they practised. While they regarded themselves as followers of the religion of Sayyidina Ibrāhīm and said that they were exactly on his creed, yet they had innovated many subsidiary laws and orders for themselves. They circumambulated the *Ka'bah* in a naked state, whistled and clapped instead of offering *Ṣalāh*, and altered the order of the months. If the prohibited month came during a war they extended if for another month, and so on. Allah has exposed their absurdities and instructed the Muslims to refrain from such behaviour.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

O children of Ādam! Take (goodly apparel for) your adornment at every place of worship. (Al-A'rāf, 7:31)

وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِندَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً

And their prayer at the (sacred) House is nothing but a whistling and a clapping of hands. (Al-Anfāl, 8:35)

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ

The shifting of the sacred month is only an addition into

disbelief. (At-Taw-bah, 9:37)

4: The fourth form of wrong they committed was that they did not accept Muhammad ﷺ as the Messenger of Allah. They argued as to how a person who walked around and ate and drank like them could be a Messenger? The Qurān has spoken against this attitude frequently and explained that there is nothing wrong in a human being receiving Messengership and Messengers of Allah had always been human beings.

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْٓ إِلَيْهِمْ

And We sent not before you (any Messengers) but men, from the poeple (of the towns), to whom we sent revelation... (Surah Yūsuf, 12:109)

5: Their fifth wrong was "*Rejection of Hereafter*" and they thought that resurrection after death was not possible. The Qurān has censored their stand in different verses:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْيَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَنْ يُّحْيِيَ الْمَوْتٰى

Do they not see that Allah who created the heaven and the earth, and was not wearied by their creation is Able to give life to the dead. (Al-Ah'qāf 46:33)

## THE JEWS

The Qurān has also refuted the Jews. These people were wayward beyond limits and practised all sort of vices that the idolaters had in them (except denial of the Hereafter). They called themselves the followers of Torah but in fact they did not follow it. Rather, Torah, so to say, was at their mercy, and they made whatever alterations they

liked in it. Their alterations in Torah were of three kinds:

1: Alteration in words, whereby they presented wrong translation to the verses of Torah.
2: Alteration in meaning, whereby they read their own meanings in the verses and invited the people to obey them. For example:

"It has remained well known to the people of every Prophet that an unbeliever and a transgressor are not alike, they are different and their fate are also different. An unbeliever is one who does not believe in the fundamontal truths of the natural religion such as Unity, Prophethood and Hereafter. Such a person deserves Hell forever. The transgressor, on the other hand, is one who does beleive in these fundamentals yet does not obey the tenets of religion in respect of his deeds and character, and pursues that which is severely prohibited. Such a person will not suffer eternal torment but will enter Paradise after undergoing his sentence in Hell. The same fact was mentioned in the Torah that a person who believed in Sayyidina Mūsa ﵇ deserves Paradise, and if he does go to Hell it would be a temporary affair. This only meant that anybody who believed in the Messenger of his time in conformity with the fundamental concepts of natural religion will be subject to this procedure. The Jews interpreted it in the sense that believing only in Sayyidina Mūsa ﵇ was sufficient for their salvation and, thus it was not necessary for them to believe in Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ.

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً

And they say "the Fire shall not touch us but for a number of days." (Al-Baqarah, 2:80)

The Qurān has clearly negated it. It says

بَلٰى مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَّأَحَاطَتْ بِهٖ خَطِيْئَتُهٗ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيْهَا خَالِدُوْنَ ○

Yea! Whoever earns evil and his sins have encompassed him, so those are the Companions of the Fire, they shall abide therein. (Al-Baqarah, 2:81)

3: The third thing was that they used to conceal from the poeple many verses of the Torah. They did this so that they could retain their esteem in the society. They feared that people will become averse to them if they found out that their learned scholars did not obey those commandments, and thus they will loose the honour and dignity they were enjoying.

Thus, they had concealed the verses that predicted the advent of Sayyidina Muḥammad ﷺ and the verses about the stoning of an adulterer and they used to instruct each other not to disclose them to the Muslims. The Qurān has unveiled it to inform the Prophet ﷺ that this is what they talk to each other

أَتُحَدِّثُوْنَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوْكُمْ بِهٖ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ

Do you speak to them of what Allah has disclosed to you, so that they may thereby contend with you before your Lord. (Al-Baqarah, 2:76)

## THE CHRISTIANS

They called themselves the followers of Sayyidina 'Isā (Jesus) ؑ.

Their first wrongdoing was their "Belief in Trinity". It implies that God has three components that are blended together in some other respects, and separated in some other respects. The first part is "Father", the second is

"Son" and the third is "Holy Ghost". The "Son" part of Him came to this world as Sayyidina 'Isā (Jesus).

Allah has negated this silly, ignorant concept through the light of knowledge, and at many places in the Qurān He has emphasised that this was an unreasonable concept from which 'Isā (Jesus) himself sought refuge.

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَاعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ (المائدة:١١٦)

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (المائدة:١١٨)

And (recall) when Allah will say: "O 'Isā, son of Maryam! Did you say to mankind 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?' 'Isā will say: "Be Thou glorified! It is not mine to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou Knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. Surely Thou and only Thou art the knower of the Unseen. I spoke to them naught but as Thou commandest me. "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." And I was a witness over them while I dwelt among them, but when Thou didst take me, Thou wast the Watcher over them. And Thou art witness over everything. If Thou chastisest them, surely they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgivest them, Thou are the Mighty, the Wise. (Al-Ma'idah, 5:116-118)

Like the idolaters, they also rejected the Messenger and drew examples for Allah and interpolated in the Book.

## HYPOCRITES

The hypocrites were mischievous, ill mannered, coward and people of low moral courage. In their hearts, revered the same deities as were worshipped by other disbelievers, but they did not have the courage to proclaim thier beliefs openly. Hence, with their tongues they affirmed Unity, Messengership and the Hereafter but, in secret, they conspired against the Muslims.

Some of them proclaimed Islam merely to further their conspiracy and treachery against it. Their hearts, however, were full of the evils of disbelief and polytheism. There were some others who confessed Islam because their elders did so. For them the real thing was to follow their elders, hence if the elders had remained unbelievers they would also have remained unbelievers and if they had embraced Islam, these people made an outward demonstration of it.

Since these hypocrities did not have any fixed beliefs and they professed Islam orally, obviously a negation of their beliefs was out of question. However, the Qurān has unveiled their evil designs and conspiring nature at many places and exposed their baseness. Examples of this can be seen in *Sūrah At-Tawbah* and *Al-Anfāl*.

## COMMANDMENTS

The next subject of the Qurān is "Commandments". These can be divided into three kinds.

1. Laws and Commands pertaining exclusively to the rights of Allah. We call this worship. These include *Purification*, *Ṣalah*, *Zakāh*, *Fasting* of Ramaḍān, *Sacrifice* and commands about *Ḥajj*. The Qurān has given basic guidelines about these matters.

2. Laws and Commands pertaining exclusively to the rights of people which are called Mutual Dealings, for example, trade, justice, witness, trust, pawning, eating of slaughtered animals, use of different drinks, bequest and inheritance etc.The rules relating to these matters are laid down in the Qurān itself.
3. Laws and Commands which are acts of worship in some respects and mutual dealings in other respects. In treating them the Qurān has described rules and instructions about Marriage and Divorce, Criminal Laws, Honesty, Torts, Wars (Jihad), Belief, Oaths and Partnership.

The Qurān wants to give to the world such a clean way of life that may allow man to live in peace and tranquility. That is why it implemented its orders in a gradual process. Any command was not given abruptly, but people were first mentally prepared for it and then it was implemented. An example of this is the prohibition of intoxicant drinks. The Arabs were so addicted to it that they had two hundred and fifty names for it in their language. To rid them of this evil habit is a miracle of the Qurān alone. When in the begining the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked about the permissibility of intoxicants, he did not at once say that it was forbidden but the Qurān said:

قُلْ فِيهِمَآ إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَآ أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا

Say: In both is a grievous sin and some benefits for people but the sin in them is more grievous than their benefits. (Al-Baqarah: 2:219)

Good natured people understood thereby that it was better to give it up. Then after sometime, the commandment was sent:

لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارٰى

Draw not near Ṣalah while you are intoxicated.

(An-Nisa, 4:43)

This brought about a general disliking for wine. Hence, after sometime again the command was:

إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ

wine and gambling (game of chance) and (sacrificing) to idols, and divining arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiwork, so abstain from it. (Al-Mā'idah, 5:90)

## BACKGROUND OF REVELATION

The Commandments in the Qurān were revealed in one of the two ways:

When Allah wished to change an evil custom among the Muslims or Disbelievers.

1. A verse or verses were revealed. For example, Sayyidah ʿĀyshah رضی اللہ تعالی عنہا states that it was customary with the Arabs that they used to take as their wives, female orphans under their custody, for the sake of their wealth or beauty. But, they did not pay them a dower similar to the one they paid on marrying any other woman.

   Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ has stated that some Arabs used to marry upto ten women at the same time, and when they could not support them they used to appropriate the property of orphans under their care.

   ʿIkramah ﷺ has said that the Arabs married upto ten wives but did not treat them with justice and equality.

   All such customs and deeds were wrong and needed to be changed in an Islamic society. So Allah revealed a

comprehensive verse which eradicated all these evils.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً

> And if you fear that you will not deal fairly with the orphans (under your wardship), then marry such other women as seem good to you, two three or four; and if you fear that you will not act justly (towards them), then (marry) only one. (An-Nisā, 4:3)

Those who were not giving full rights to the orphan women under their care and taken as their wives were advised through this verse that it was not proper to marry these orphan women when Allah allowed them to marry upto four wives from among the other women.

This also set a limit of four wives for those who married upto ten women and then were unjust and unfair to them. It also emphasised that this permission was subject to strict justice and equality to all the four. If they feared that they would be unjust and unfair then they should be content with only one wife.

Thus a single verse put an end to several evils at the same time.

2: The other cause of the revelation of commands was an enquiry by the companions about any particular subject. Examples have been given in chapter 2 under the heading "Causes of Revelation".

## STORIES

The third and important subject of the Qurān is Stories and Happenings. These can be divided in two parts (1): Events of the past, and (2) Future events.

### EVENTS OF THE PAST

Of the past events, Allah has mostly described the events related to Prophets and Messengers علیهم السلام . He has also related account of pious men and disobedient nations.

The Qurān has described the events in the lives of twenty seven Prophets ﷺ whose names in chronological order are as under:

Ādam, Nūḥ, Idrīs, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Isma'īl, Isḥāq Lūṭ, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf, Shu'ayb, Mūsā, Hārūn, Yūsha', Hizqīl, Yūnus, Ilyās, Al-Yasa', Shamū'il Dāwood, Sulaymān, Zul-kifl, 'Uzayr, Zakariyya, Yaḥyā and 'Isā علیهم السلام.

In addition to the above Prophets the following ten persons and nations have also been mentioned in the Qurān.

Aṣḥāb-ul-Jannah (Companions of the Garden), Aṣḥāb-ul-Qaryah (People of a township). Luqmān, Aṣḥabus Sabt (People of Saturday), Aṣḥābur-Rass (Companions of Rass), Zulqarnayn, Aṣḥāb-ul-Khaf (cave-sleepers) and Raqīm, Qaum-e-Sabā (People of Sheba), Aṣḥāb-ul-Ukhdūd (People of Ukhdūd), Aṣḥāb-ul-Fīl (Lords of Elephants).

The aim of the Qurān in describing these stories is not to recall history but by recalling them, moral lessons and

advice for the Muslims. It tells us too that the happenings of the previous nations were being recited by one who was unlettered and had never been in company of anyone who could teach him or impart that knowledge to him. Hence indeed he was being informed by Allah, and the source of the words he was reciting was not any human being but Allah Himself.

Further, there are treasures of knowledge in these narrations and every verse of the Qurān provides guidance to mankind in countless issues.

## WHY REPETITION OF EVENTS?

Sometimes the same story is repeated in the Qurān several times. The events related to Sayyidina Mūsa ﷺ for instance have been described seventy two times. Why it is so? One might feel that it would have been easier and simpler for the people if an event were narrated only once and relevant tenets described instead. Many differences would have been eliminated thereby.

In fact, there are several expedient reasons for such repetitions.

1: The Qurān was not revealed all at once but it was revealed gradually and it was sent to those people who had to face immense hardships and ever new trials in their early days. In fact it would not be wrong to say that their entire life was spent in warfares, sacrifices and hard work, paricularly in the stage of their progress. They could have become disheartened if solace was offered to them repeatedly. That is why we find that the Qurān has described the events related to previous Prophets عليهم السلام when Muslims were faced with difficulties, and they were repeatedly told that they were not the only ones facing these trials but every

people charged with the duty to invite to righteousness had passed trials and hardships but ultimately they gained success and victory.

For the same reason sometimes all the events of a Prophet do not occur in the Qurān at one place but different parts of the same event have been described at different places in relevance to the subject under discussion.

2: It becomes clear from the repetition of these stories that the purpose of the Qurān is not to give the details of various commands but it describes only the principles underlying them. The basic purpose of the Qurān is to reform the beliefs, exhort to moral behaviour and character-building. As for the details of the laws, they were taught and explanined by the Prophet ﷺ through non-Qurānic revelations.

This approach of the Qurān is very convincing proof for the authority of Prophetic Traditions (*Ḥadith*). If the Qurān alone was meant to be the final argument in Islamic law, and *Ḥadith* had no such authority the Qurān would have described the Commandments instead of repeating the stories which would have been left to non-Qurānic revelations. Obviously, the purpose of narrating the stories would have been served in that way. But adopting the approach as has been done the Qurān has emphasised that its purpose is to impart to mankind correct belief and build their character. It describes only the underlying principles. About the details it says:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ
لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ○

But no, by your Lord! they will not believe until they make

> you (O Prophet) the Judge of what is in dispute between them, then find no vexation in their hearts over what you decide, and submit with full submission. (An-Nisa. 4:65)

3: The third wisdom in repetition of stories is that it reflects on the miraculous nature of the Qurān. It is human psychology that listening to the same thing over and over again tires the ears. Even an interesting story loses its charm. But the Qurānic narrations are such that every time the reader or listener gains a fresh interest and insight into it and one cannot resist concluding that Qurānic discourse cannot be the product of human mind.

## FUTURE EVENTS

The Qurān has also made predictions and prophecies. These include the signs of the Doomsday, events of the Day of Judgement and the scene of that Day, torments of Hell, and the charms and pleasures of Paradise. Hence appearance of a strange animal on earth, coming of Gog and Magog, the Trumpet of angel Isrāfil ﷺ, Reckoning Mutual Conversation among the dwellers of Hell find mention in the Qurān frequently.

## PARABLES

The Qurān uses two kinds of parables. The first kind are used as examples to explain things, eg.

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ
سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِيْ كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِّائَةُ حَبَّةٍ

> The similitude of those who expend their riches in the way of Allah is as the similitude of a grain that grows seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains.
>
> (Al-Baqarah. 2:261)

Such examples have been used to state that the reward in the Hereafter will be seven hundred times what one spends in the way of Allah in this life. Sometimes, it is more than that. Man cannot understand it easily so Allah explains it through an example that just as a grain can grow seven hundred grains on the earth so the reward will be seven hundred times in the next world.

Secondly, the examples known as "Proverbs" have been used in the Quran in two ways. There are some which gained coinage after the revelation of the Quran. In other words, the Quran invented them, for example.

هَلْ جَزَآءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ۝

Is the recompense of goodness anything but goodness?

(Ar-Rahman, 55:60)

وَأَنْ تَعْفُوٓا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى

And that you should forgo is nearer to piety.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:237)

The second type of proverbs are those that are not proverbs actually but the meaning of the verse points to the one already in use. There are several such examples in the Quran. For example there is a popular Arabic proverb

لَيْسَ الْخَبَرُ كَالْعِيَانِ

or in Persian

شنیده کے بود مانند دیده

(Hearing is not like witnessing)

This is the same as "Seeing is Believing" in English. This is used in the following verse of the Quran. when

Prophet Sayyidina Ibrāhīm عليه السلام said to Allah, "Show me how you give life to the dead". On this Allah said, "Do you not beleive; Sayyidina Ibrāhīm عليه السلام then said:

بَلٰى وَلٰكِنْ لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِيْ

Yea, but that my heart, may rest at ease. (Al-Baqarah, 2:60)

Similarly, a popular proverb runs:

لَا يُلْدَغُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مِنْ جُحْرٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ

A Muslim cannot be bitten twice (by snake) through the same hole."

This is reflected in a verse of Surah Al-Yūsuf. The brothers of Sayyidina Yūsuf عليه السلام, who had cast him down in a well earlier, requested Sayyidina Ya'qūb عليه السلام to send Binyāmin with them. He said,

هَلْ اٰمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اِلَّا كَمَآ اَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَخِيْهِ

Should I entrust him to you but as I entrusted his brother to you before? (Surah Yūsuf, 12:64)

PART-2

# THE SCIENCE OF TAFSĪR

## (EXEGESIS)

1. INTRODUCTION
2. PRINCIPLES
3. HISTORY

**CHAPTER-1**

# THE SCIENCE OF EXEGESIS (TAFSĪR) AND ITS SOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

The word "Tafsīr" is derived from "Fasr" which means "to open". Since the meanings of the Qurān are openly described, this science is known as the "Science of Tafsīr" or Exegesis. In the beginning this word was applied exclusively to the explanation of the Qurān.[1] During the era of the Prophet ﷺ the sciences were not yet grown much, so there were not many branches of the sciences. But when it acquired the shape of an organised knowledge and received attention from different angles, it became a very vast and developed science, and kept on expanding according to needs of the time. The techincal interpretation of 'Ilm-ut-Tafsīr (Science of exegesis...) The science of Tafsīr is that branch of knowledge that deals with the method of the delivery of the words of Qurān, their interpretation, their individual and composite forms and expediencies. It includes the meanings derived from them in their composite state. In the summation of meanings due consideration is

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1: 'Allamah Zarkashī has defined Tafsir in brief as: "علم يعرف به فهم كتاب الله المنزل على نبيه محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم و بيان معانيه واستخراج احكامه و حِكَمه." {The knowledge through which one gains understanding of the Qur'an and comprehension of its commandments and wisdom.} (Al-Burhān, v1, p.13)

allowed to the background of revelation, the abrogator and the abrogated and equivocal stories.[2]

In the light of this definition the science of Tafsīr has the following components.

1: Methods of delivery of the words of Qurān, that is how the words of the Qurān may be read. Early Arabic commentators used to mention in detail the various recitals of every verse in their exegesis and for this purpose a separate science by the name of "*Qirā'āt*" (Recitals) also exists. This has been dealt with briefly in the preceding pages.

2: Interpretation of the words of Qurān, that is, the lexical meanings of the words. For this it is essential to be thoroughly conversant with the science of lexicons. That is why we find numerous references to the scholars of lexicons and to Arabic literature in the books of exegesis.

3: Individual Forms of the words. This implies a knowledge of every word as to form, its root, how did it acquire its present form, its conjugation, and the meanings and attributes that go with that conjugation form. For this the knowledge of etymology is needed.

4: Rules regarding compound words. This is to know the meaning it conveys when it combines with other words? What is its grammatical analysis? Why the diacritical marks so placed and to what meaning they point at? For this, the science of Syntax and Meanings is essential.

5: The ultimate meaning of the compound phrase. It is to know what meaning a particular verse conveys in reference to its context? Depending on the subjects of the verse, help is taken from various sciences. Apart from these, sometimes one has to look at it from the

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2: Ruh ul-Ma'āni, Āalūsi, v. 1, p. 4.

point of language and literature. *Ḥadith* and principles of jurisprudence are also considered.

6: Summation of the meanings. Due consideration is given to the background of verses and details of short and concise expressions of the Qurān. For this purpose mostly the *Aḥādith* are relied upon. But this is such a vast subject that the knowledge of almost every art and science of the world can be incorporated in it because sometimes in a very short sentence the Qurān expresses an endless world of realities and secrets. For examples, the Qurān says...

وَفِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمْۚ أَفَلَا تُبۡصِرُونَ

And also in your own selves — do you not see?

(Az-Zāriyāt, 51:21)

Just see that the entire subjects of physiology and psychology can be encompassed in the explanation of this short sentence, yet it may not be said with certainty that it explains fully the secrets of Allah's infinite Wisdom in creation as contained in this phrase. Hence through intellect, thinking, experiments and observation, different subjects become part of the science of Tafsīr (Exegesis).

## TAFSĪR AND TA'WĪL

In the early period another word "*Ta'wīl*" was also used for "Tafsīr" and even the Qurān itself has used the former for its Tafsīr e.g.

وَمَا يَعۡلَمُ تَأۡوِيلَهُۥٓ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ

But none knows its interpretation except Allah.

(Al-'Imrān, 3:7)

Thereafter the scholars began to argue whether the two words were interchangeable and synonymous or different

from each other?

Imām Abu Ubayd and some others think they are synonymous, while some other scholars have tried to point out differences in the two words, but so many different opinions have been expressed to denote these differences that it is very difficult to enumerate all of them. Some of these opinions are.[3]

1: "*Tafsīr*" is the name of explanation of individual words exclusively, and "*Ta'wīl*" is explanation of a sentence or sentences.

2: "*Tafsīr*" means the description of apparent meaning of words but "*Ta'wīl*" means to explain the inherent meaning.

3: "*Tafsīr*" is an interpretation of a verse which is not open to any other interpretation while *Ta'wīl* is to choose one interpretation out of the several possible in explaining a verse.

4: "*Tafsīr*" is an unquestionable explanation while "*Ta'wīl*" may be challenged with another explanation.

5: "*Tafsīr*" is the name of explaining the words, and "*Ta'wīl*" is meant to expound the lessons derived from them.

And there are other differences too.

6: In fact, the opinion of Abu 'Ubayd appears to be correct that there is no real difference in the use of these two words. Those who hold the two words as different have not given us a definite and unanimous verdict through their divergent arguments. It seems that some scholars did try to give the two words different meanings but they could not give a convincing argument and gain universal acceptability. That is why the commentators even from the earliest times are using them as synonyms and one word is used for the other hence it is futile to waste time in this discussion.

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3: Al-Itqān, Suyūṭi, v2, p173.

# SOURCES OF TAFSĪR (EXEGESIS)

After this brief introduction to the Science of *Tafsīr*, the most important thing to know is the sources of "*Tafsīr*" of the Qurān.

What are the available means through which *Tafsīr* (exegesis) of a verse can be determined? The answer to this question calls for some details which are given below.

First of all it should be understood that the Qurānic verses are of two types. Some verses are so clear and evident that any one who knows the language can easily understand their meaning that is why the question of any difference of opinion in the exegesis of these verses does not arise. The source of exegesis of such verses is "Arabic lexicon". Except for an expert view of Arabic language and common sense, nothing is needed to understand them.[4]

The other type comprises verses that are comprehensive in meaning and in which there is some ambiguity or difficulty in explanation or, in order to grasp thier meaning, it is necessary to study the background in which they were revealed. Or, they deal with delicate legal questions or deep unknown facts and knowledge. Only a knowledge of Arabic language is not sufficient to comprehend such verses, but other information is needed to derive their proper exegesis. In the following lines the exegesic sources of these type

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4: والحق ان علم التفسير منه ما يتوقف على النقل ....ومنه ما لا يتوقف ....الخ

Al-Burhān, Zarkashī, v2, p171, chapter 41. and Al-Itqān , v2, p183. chapter 78.

of verses are described.

Keeping this in view, there are six sources of the exegesis or *Tafsīr* of the Qurān. They are, the

1: Qurān itself,
2: Prophetic Traditions,
3: Sayings of the Companions رضی اللہ تعالی عنہم,
4: Sayings of the followers of Companions,
5: Arabic Lexicon and
6: Common sense.

Here, we present some details of each of these sources and their position in the science of *Tafsīr*.

## FIRST SOURCE: THE QURĀN ITSELF

1: The first source of exegesis of the Qurān is the Qurān itself, that is, sometimes its verses explain each other. Something is left unsaid in a verse but said in detail in another verse. For example, it is said in Al-Fātiḥah:

اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ○ صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Guide us Thou to the straight way, the way of those whom Thou hast blessed. (Al-Fātiḥah, 1:6-7)

It is not clear in this verse as to who are the blessed people? But at another place it is stated:

فَأُولٰٓئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ أَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ وَالصِّدِّيْقِيْنَ وَالشُّهَدَآءِ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ○

They are with those whom Allah has blessed — of the Prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous. (An-Nisā, 4:69)

Similarly, it is stated in a verse:

فَتَلَقّٰى اٰدَمُ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ

Then Ādam received certain words (of revelatoin) from his Lord, and He relented towards him.(Al-Baqarah, 2:37)

It is not revealed what those words were? They have been identified in another verse:

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَآ أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِيْنَ ○

They (Ādam and Ḥawwā) said: We have wronged ourselves, and if Thou forgivest us not, and hath not mercy on us, we shall surely be among the losers. (Al-'Arāf, 7:23)

Further, at another place it is stated:

يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ○

O you who have believed! Fear Allah, and be with the truthful ones. (At-Tawbah, 9:119) .

This verse does not tell us who the truthful people are. They are identified in another verse:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيّٖنَ وَاٰتَى الْمَالَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ ذَوِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسَاكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَالسَّآئِلِيْنَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَى الزَّكٰوةَ وَالْمُوْفُوْنَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوْا وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ فِي الْبَأْسَآءِ وَالضَّرَّآءِ وَحِيْنَ الْبَأْسِ أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ○

It is not virtue that you turn your faces to the East and to the West, but true virtue is of him who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book (Divine revelations), and the Prophets, and gives his wealth, for love of Him to the kinderd, and to orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and to those who ask and to set slaves free, and (of him who) establishes the Ṣalāh and pays the Zakāh, and of those who fulfil their covenant when they covenant one, and are persevering in distress and affliction, and in the time of conflict. Those are they who are the truthful, and those—they are the God-fearing. (Al-Baqarah, 2:177)

This verse has made it clear that by "Truthful people" are meant those who possess the foregoing virtues.

There are several other examples in the Qurān but the three mentioned here may suffice.

1: The Qurān is explained from the Qurān itself through another recital that clarifies what is not clear from the first recital.

For example, in the verse describing the method of ablution, according to one recital it is read.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوْا بِرُءُوْسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ

Wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows and wipe your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles... (Al-Ma'idah, 5:6)

According to Arabic grammar, it may also be translated wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows and wipe your heads and your feet up to the ankles.

But in another recital the word أَرْجُلَكُم (*Arjulakum*) has been used instead of أرجلِكم (*Arjulikum*) which can only mean "and wash your feet". Hence the second recital clarifies that the same is meant in the first recital as well and it cannot mean to wipe the feet.

Thus an exegesis of the Qurān based on uninterrupted recitals shall be reliable and certain. Although authentic recitals do not provide a knowledge that is certain yet they have a great importance in exegesis, but opinions about the rare recitals are divided. Some commentators attach no importance to them while some accept them as related by an individual alone in exegesis. This question is dealt with in detail in the Books of *Fiqh*.

3: Another form of "Exegesis of the Qurān by the Qurān, is to take into consideration the context of the verse under study. In this way the complex verse is sometimes explained. For example, in *Surah Al-Aḥzāb* the Prophet's wives are addressed in these words:

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَى

And stay in your houses, and display not your adornment like the displaying of the (time of) former pagansim. (Al-Aḥzāb, 33:33)

Seeing that this is addressed to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ those who are ignorant of the principles of *Shari'ah* have claimed that the commandment for Ḥijāb (Veil) was applicable exclusively to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ, and that it did not apply to other women in general. But the context of the Qurān belies this claim. There are many other commadments addressed to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ in the verses that precede and follow. For example the commands are: do not be complaisant of speech, speak of virtue, establish Ṣalāh, pay Zakāh, and

obey Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

No sane person can say that any of these commands is exclusively meant for the wives of the Prophet ﷺ and other women are not obliged to obey them. Hence to pick out just one sentence out of the text that gives so many commands and to assert that it does not apply to other women, is contrary to the contents of the other verses and *Aḥādith*. The fact is that all these commands have a general application for all women. The specific mention of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ is meant only to reflect their greater responsibility and to express that they are under greater obligation to obey the Commands of Allah.

Similarly, it is stated in another verse:

وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِن وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ

And when you ask them (the wives of the Prophet) of any good, ask them from behind a curtain. (Al-Aḥzāb, 33:53)

Some ignorant people have said about this verse too, that it applies exclusively to the wives of the Prophet ﷺ although the next phrase of this same verse clarifies that this command has a general application for all women. It says:

ذَٰلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ

This is purer for your hearts and their hearts.

(Al-Aḥzab, 33:53)

Obviously, to gain purity of heart is not limited to the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ alone but all Muslim women should gain it. Hence, the command given in this verse cannot be regarded as exclusive for some particular women.[5]

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5: There are many more explicit reasons supporting the contention that the command of Ḥijāb is universal but we have limited ourselves here to the context of the verse.

Similarly, there is another verse of *Surah Al-Aḥzāb*, that states:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَ يُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا ○

Allah only desires to take away from you all abomination, O people of the household (of Muḥammad) and to purify you with a thorough purifying.

(Al-Aḥzāb, 33:33)

Some people conclude from this verse that the people of the household includes the children etc of the Prophet ﷺ and not his wives. But the context of the Qurān clearly refutes this idea, because the verses preceding and following this verse throughout address the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. Then how may they be excluded from the term people of the household? The next verse particularly states:

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ

And remember that which is recited (by the Prophet) in your houses..... (Al-Aḥzāb, 33:34)

The word بيوت (houses) in this verse signifies that people of the household includes the holy wives primarily and they cannot be separated from the meaning of the verse.

These are only a few examples. If we ponder over the Qurān we will learn that many of the exegetical issues are solved through a reference to the verses of the Qurān. Sometimes an exposition of a verse in this manner makes it so clear that a reasonable person will not refute it. Such an exegesis is final and certain. Sometimes, however, an exegesis made through a reference to the context is not so certain. Hence the commentators and other scholars may

differ on it.

This was a short introduction to the "Exegesis of the Qurān by the Qurān." Some exegetics have expounded the entire Qurān in this manner in which every verse has been explained with the help of some other verse of the Qurān. One such exegesis is by 'Allāmah Ibn Jauzī and 'Allāmah Suyūṭī has mentioned it in his book *Al-Itqān*.[6]

Another valuable contribution of the same pattern is the recent effort of a scholar of Madinah, Sheikh Muḥammad Amīn bin Muḥammad Mukhtār Shanqīṭī. The book is named Aḍwā-ul-bayān fi Īḍāḥ-i l-Qurān bil Qurān. In the Foreword of this book he has given the various forms of "Exegesis of the Qurān" with great clarity and details.[7]

## SECOND SOURCE:
## TRADITIONS OF THE HOLY PROPHET ﷺ

The second source of exegesis of the Qurān are the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The Qurān has clarified at many places that the real purpose of sending him in this world was for him to explain the Qurānic verses through his words and deeds:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ۝

And We have now revealed to you (O Prophet) the Admonition that you may make clear to mankind what has been revealed unto them. (An-Naḥl, 16:44)

In this verse Allah has made it clear that the purpose of his advent was to explain the Qurān. It further says:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ

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6: Al-Itqān v2, p.175.

7: v1, pp7-37. Printed at Darul Isphahānī, Jaddah, 1378 AH.

وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ○

Certainly Allah has conferred a favour on the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, who recites to them His revelations, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the wisdom, though before that they were certainly in manifest error. (Al-Imrān, 3:164)

Further, it has been stated in *Sūrah An-Nisā*.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ ○

Surely We have revealed the Book to you (O Prophet) with truth, so that you may judge between people by means of what Allah has shown you. (An-Nisā, 4:105)

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ○

And We have not revealed the Book to you except that you may make clear to them that wherein they differ, and as a guidance and mercy to a people who believe.

(An-Naḥl, 16:64)

In these verses the Qurān makes itself clear that the purpose of sending the Prophet ﷺ in this world was only that he may teach the people the guidance of the Qurān and its deep knowledge and thereby guide them how to live properly. Hence it is proved from the Qurān itself that the Prophet's ﷺ teachings are a significant source of exegesis of the Qurān.

Even otherwise it does not call for a lengthy reasoning to stress that the correct meanings of the Book may best be

explained by the one on whom it has been revealed. There can be no one more stupid than the one who claims, that the, exegesis is better known to him than the Prophet ﷺ to whom the Qurān was revealed.

Some people try to create a confusion that the importance of the Prophet's ﷺ sayings cannot be denied but we cannot rely upon them as they have not reached us through authentic sources.

But this type of thinking casts aspersion on Allah that on the one hand He has sent the Prophet ﷺ as the Teacher of the Qurān that every Muslim was obliged to follow till the Last Day, but on the other hand, He made no arrangement to preserve his teachings and explanations. Can such a thing be said by one who believes in the eternal wisdom and supreme authority of Allah, and who has read the following verse of the Qurān?

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allah does not charge a soul save to its capacity.

(Al-Baqarah, 2:286)

Some people go to the extent of saying that the Prophet ﷺ was the Teacher of the Qurān as long as he lived but in our times his teachings are not needed. (I seek forgiveness of Allah for narrating it). This is to say that the Companions رضی الله عنهم needed a Prophet to teach them the Qurān although Arabic was their mother tongue, they were aware of the nuance and idiomatic use of the words, and they not only knew the revelationary background but in fact passed through it and they witnessed the causes of revelation of each verse. As against that people of our times whose mother tongue is not Arabic who do not go through the environment of revelation and the revelationary background claim that

they do not need the guidance of a Prophet to learn the exegesis of the Qurān. Can any reasonable and just man swallow such absurd notions?

How reliable are the means through which the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ have reached us is a very detailed subject of study. Libraries have vast collections of literature on the subject of *Ḥadith* and *Asmā'ur'Rijāl* (the names and character of men). It is a different matter, to hunt for excuses to satisfy personal bents but if these subjects are studied with a sincere motive and unbiased mind one cannot resist drawing the conclusion that Allah has not made the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ obligatory without ensuring its preservation in a manner that is beyond human imagination. Leaving aside the other branches of the science of *Ḥadith*, if we just go through the subject of *Asmā-ur-Rijāl*[8] an achievement of the people of which they may feel proud we will see that it has no parallel among any other people. Every *Ḥadith* from the times of the Prophet ﷺ till today is well recorded in relevant Books with full information of its analysis and the narrator. It includes details on his birth, his education and lessons on *Ḥadith* which of the narrators he had met, his general character, the state of his memory, the cautions he exercised in narrating a *Ḥadith* and the opinion in which he was held by his contemporary scholars and those after that time? These books exist even today and if anybody desires to find answers to these questions, he may go throgh the pages of these books and the answer will be there.

We do not intend to initiate a detailed discussion on the preservation of *Ḥadith* because a vast literature on this

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8: The term literally means "Names of the people" but in religious terminology of Islam it is applied for "Names and characters of the narrators of *Ḥadith*."

subject already exists and can be consulted for this purpose. However, we wish to point out that there is no logic in denying the use of the Traditions of the Prophet ﷺ for an exegesis of the Qurān whether viewed through the Qurān, common sense and historical events or through any other rightful method.

However, it is true that in today's vast collection of Traditions we find authentic as well as unsound narrations. Therefore, before taking a decision on the basis of a narration found anywhere, one must thoroughly verify the narration on the basis of relevant principles. The scrutiny of those narrations found in the books of exegesis is particularly essential because most of the commentators have just collected all sorts of traditions in their book without bringing their research and investigation into discussion in the Traditional manner. Hence only such persons can benefit from them who hold an expert view on the Science of *Ḥadith* and its related subjects and who know the principles of picking out the authentic from the unsound narrations.

## THIRD SOURCE:

## SAYINGS OF THE COMPANIONS ؓ

It is the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who learnt the Qurān directly from him. Some of them had devoted their entire lives to learn the Qurān, its exegesis and related knowledge directly from the sayings and deeds of the Prophet ﷺ. Their language was Arabic, and they were fully aware of the enviroment of revelation of the Qurān. Rather than rely on their linguistic excellence they learnt the Qurān verse by verse from the Prophet ﷺ. Imām Abu 'Abdur Raḥmān Sulmī a renowned Tābi'ī (epigone) scholar said:

حدثنا الذين كانوا يقرءون القران كعثمان بن عفان و عبد الله بن مسعود و غيرهم انهم كانوا اذا تعلموا من النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم عشر ا يات لم يتجاوزوها حتّى يعلموا ما فيها من العلم والعمل (الاتقان، ص ١٧٦، ج ٢، نوع ٧٨)

Those (of the Companions) who used to teach the Qurān, such as Sayyidina 'Uthmān bin 'Affān ﷺ and Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ and others told us that they did not proceed further with their lessons until they had learnt ten verses from the Prophet ﷺ and until they had received all knowledge and practical applications related to it.[9]

This is why Sayyidina Anas ﷺ has been reported in Musnad Ahmad to have said:

كان الرجل اذا قرأ البقرة و ال عمران جدّ فى اعيننا
(الاتقان، ص ١٧٦، ج ٢، نوع ٧٨)

When some one had learnt *Sūrah Al-Baqarah* and *Sūrah Al-'Imrān* he was regarded very highly in our eyes.[10]

And it is narrated in Mu'–aṭṭā Imām Mālik that:

اقام ابن عمر على حفظ البقرة ثمان سنين (الاتقان، ص ١٧٦، ج ٢، نوع ٧٨)

'Abdullah bin 'Umar took eight years to memorise *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*.[11]

Obviously Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin 'Umar رضى الله عنه did not have such a weak memory as to take eight years just to memorise the words of this *Surah*. It took him so long actually to learn the interpretation and other relevant knowledge alongwith memorising the words.

9: Al-Itqān, v2, p176 Chapter 78
10: Al-Itqān v2,p 176 Chapter 78
11: Al-Itqān v2,p176, Chapter 78

And Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has said:

والذی لا اله غیره ما نزلت اية من كتاب الله الا و انا اعلم فيمن نزلت واين نزلت ولو اعلم احدا اعلم بكتاب الله منى تناله المطايا لآتيته (تفسیر ابن کثیر، ص ۳، ج ۱)

> By the Being except whom there is none worthy of worship, no verse of the Qurān is revealed about which I do not know where and for whom it was revealed. And if I hear of anyone who knows the Book of Allah more than me and the means of transport is available to me I would certainly go to him.[12]

Hence, after the traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ the third source of exegesis of the Qurān are the statements of the Companions who had devoted time and effort to learn it. But even here certain factors must be kept in view.

1: Even in the exegetic sayings of the Companions رضی الله عنهم we come across authentic as well as unsound narrations. Hence, they too must be scrutinised on the principles of *Ḥadith* before placing any reliance on them.

2: Sayings of the Companions ؓ would be cited only when an explicit commentary of a verse by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not available through authentic means. If such an explanation is found in the authentic traditions, the statements of the Compnanions رضی الله عنهم will only have a supportive value, but if any of these statements differ from the Prophetic tradition, it shall not be acceptable.

3: When there is no explanation available from the Holy Prophet ﷺ and there exists no difference in the various explanations of the Companions ؓ their view would

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12: Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, v1. p3.

be adopted.

4: When there are differences in the various exegesis given by the Companions and if harmony can be brought about among them then it would be adopted. But if it is not possible to harmonise them we then shall adopt an exegsis which an adept scholar deduces from them through established reasoning.[13]

## FOURTH SOURCE:

## SAYINGS OF TĀBI'Ī (SUCCESSORS OF THE COMPANIONS رضی الله عنهم)

Scholars differ whether the sayings of a Tābi'ī can be a conclusive argument in exegesis or not? Ibn Kathīr has stated that if a Tābi'ī has reported an exegesis from a Companion it will have the same status as that of a Companion. But if he gives his own interpretation then it will be seen whether another Tābi'ī differs from him. If that is so, his interpretation will not be acceptable and conclusion will be drawn on the basis of other sources of exegesis. If no difference exists among the Tābi'īn their opinion will be acceptable without doubt.

## FIFTH SOURCE:
## ARABIC LANGUAGE

It has been asserted earlier that the only source for interpretation of a Qurānic verse will be the Arabic language if its meaning is clear, and no ambiguity, doubt or confusion exists, nor any historical background is required to understand it. But when one is faced with ambiguity or deeper sense or religious laws are being drawn from the verse, interpretation may not be made by means of Arabic

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13: This principle in summarised from Al-Burhān v2, p172, and Al-Itqān v2, pp176-178.

Lexicon alone. In such a situation the basic sources of exegesis would be the Qurān itself, Prophetic Traditions and statements of the Companions رضی الله تعالی عنهم and the Tābi'īn. Only after that will recourse be had to the Arabic language because Arabic is a very vast language and its words are used in several meanings, and a single sentence may be interpreted in several ways. Hence any inference drawn on the basis of language also may result in confusion. That is why some authorities reject language alone as a source of exegesis. Imām Muḥammad رحمة الله عليه is reported to have said that he considers an exegesis through lexicon to be undersirable. But 'Allāmah Zarkashī states that Imām Muḥammad did not mean to ignore the role of lexicon in the Science of Exegesis altogether, but he meant that it is not permitted to choose vague meanings in preference to the most apparent and appropriate interpertations. Evidently, the Qurān has been revealed on the idiom of the language of the Arabs. Hence whenever the Qurān and *Ḥadith* or sayings of the Companions رضی الله عنهم do not offer an interpretation of a verse, it would be interpreted in the light of the idiom of the language, choice of vague meanings derived from Arabic poetry but not used in ordinary conversation is totally wrong, although found in dictionaries.[14]

This may be understood through an example.

The Qurān states that when Banu Isra'īl asked Sayyidina Mūsā ﷺ for water, Allah gave him the order:

فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ (البقرة-٦٠)

And strike with your staff the rock.

If this sentence is spoken before any Arabic knowing person he would clearly understand from it that it is a

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14: Al-Burhān, v2, p16.

command to strike the staff against the stone, and it would be a valid interpretation of this sentence. But, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khan has claimed on the basis of vague usages of the language that this sentence means, "Walk on this rock with the support of your staff."[15] Here the meaning of the word اضرب (strike) has been taken as *walk* instead of *strike* and that of الحجر (stone or rock). This meaning is imposed because even if a vague reference is available in the books of language the normal ussage rejects it altogether.[16] Imām Ahmad has said that it is forbidden to draw such interpretations on linguistic grounds. No sane person can subscribe to it, either.

## SIXTH SOURCE:

## COMMON SENSE

In fact, common sense is needed for every thing in this world, and, obviously, it is required to draw interpretation from the above mentioned five sources also. But we wish to point it out as a constant sources of exegesis. The Qurān is an endless ocean of deep mystic meanings. By means of the above five sources its subjects can, of course, be understood to the extent required but as far as its mysteries and commands are concerned, it can never be said that a climax has been reached and there is no room for any further deliberation. On the contrary, the door to ponder over and deliberate on its inner meanings shall remain open till the Last Day. And whoever has been blessed with insight and fear of Almighty Allah may discover ever new

15: Tafsīr ul Qurān, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khan, v1. p91. Lahore.

16: We have quoted him here by way of example alone otherwise his explanation does not find support in language too. There are some errors on that point also to for example when used to imply walk ضرب is followed by فی (واذا ضربتم فی الارض) which is not found here.

realities. This is why the commentators in every age have made additions to this chapter according to their undersanding. This is exactly what the Prophet ﷺ meant when he prayed for Sayyidina 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās ؓ in these words:

اللهم علمه التاويل وفقهه فى الدين

> O Allah! Bestow on him the Sciences of Exegesis and Comprehension of religion.[17]

But it should be remembered in this connection that only such realities and deeper meanings drawn through reasoning shall be reliable as do not clash with other religious principles and the foregoing five sources. If anything is deduced by disregerding the rules of exegesis, it will have no standing in religion.



17: Al-Burhān v.2 p 161.

CHAPTER-2

# UNRELIABLE SOURCES OF EXEGESIS

After getting acquainted with authentic and reliable sources of the Science of Exegesis it seems essential to point out the unreliable sources. These have led many a people to grave misunderstandings and they have cited them as the basis of their commentaries. These sources are:

## 1) ISRĀ'ĪLIYYĀT OR JUDAICA

These are narratives that have reached us through Jews and Christians. Some of these have been taken directly from Bible or Talmud and some from Mishnah[18] and their commentaries some are the words of mouth which were being transferred from one to another of the people of the Book, and were popular among the Jews and Christians of Arabia. A vast many of such stories are yet found in the existing books of exegesis. The renowned researcher and commentator Ibn Kathīr has stated that there are three kinds of such narrations, and each kind has to be dealt with in a different way.

i) Isra'īliyāts that have been verified as true by other authentic sources. For example, the drowning of Fir'aun (Pharoah), the contest of Sayyidina Mūsa ﷺ with the magicians and his ascent on the Mount Sinai

18: A collection of precepts and customs embodying Jewish oral law.

etc. are reliable narrations because they are authenticated by the Qurān and *Hadith*.

ii) Isra'īliyāts that have been proved to be false by other arguments, for instance, the story that Sayyidina Sulaymān ﵇ had become an apostate in his later years (God forbid).[19] This narration is absolutely false because the Qurān explicity refuted it. Similarly is the blatant lie about Sayyidina Dawood ﵇ that he committed adultery with the wife of his general Ūriah.[20]

iii) Israī'lyāts which are neither proved to be correct nor false through arguments. Such as the injunction of Torah, and so on. About them the Prophet ﷺ has said:

لَا تُصَدِّقُوهَا وَلَا تُكَذِّبُوهَا

Neither confirm them nor falsify them.

It is permissible to mention such narrations, but neither a religious tenet can be based on them nor can they be confirmed or refuted. It is of no benefit to cite these narrations either. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr[21] رحمة الله عليه has stated that the Qurān itself teaches us how to deal with such narrations. It says:

سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُل رَّبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِم مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيهِم مِّنْهُمْ أَحَدًا ○

19: Bible, Book of the kings 11:2-13.

20: Ibid, Samuel 13:14.

21: Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Muqaddama v1, p4 and Usūl ut Tafsīr, Ibn Taymiyyah p33.

(Some) will say, They were three, the fourth of them was their dog and (some) say, "Five the sixth of them was their dog, conjecturing about the unseen. And (some others) said, "Seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say "My Lord knows best their number — none knows them but a few, so contend not concerning them but with an outward contention; and ask any of them for a pronouncement on them." (Al-Kahf, 18:22)

In this verse Allah has mentioned different Isra'īlite versions current among the people of the Book about the number of the Cave Dwellers. He has also laid down these principles:

1: Describing the Isra'īli narrations and their differences are permissible.

2: Those of the narrations that have been proved false must be rejected as has been done by Allah refuting the first two by saying رجما بالغيب (conjecturing about the unseen).

3: Nothing should be said about the version which is not proved false. Allah has done so about the third narration.

4: Our belief about the truth or falsehood of these versions should be that the real knowledge rests with Allah.

5: We must refrain from engaging in unneassary debate on these narrations.

6: It is not proper to probe into the veracity of these narrations because it will be a futile exercise. One does not stand to gain anything in this world or the next.

Some narrations are evidently Isr'ailite but it is not so apparent about the others, and it is so determind through other evidences. Most of the narrations reported by Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb bin Munabbīh and mentioned in the

books of exegesis belong to this category. Hence it seems appropriate to know about something of these persons.

## KA'B AL-AḤBĀR

His full name was Ka'b bin Māti' al Ḥimyari but was popularly known by the title of Ka'b-al-Aḥbār or Ka'b ul-Ḥibr. He belonged to Yemen and had a high place among the Jewish Scholars. He lived in the pre-prophetic dark era as well as the Prophetic days but could not embrace Islam during the life-time of the Prophet ﷺ. In the Year 12 A.H., during the caliphate of Sayyidina 'Umar ؓ he came to Madinah and embraced Islam. It has been reported in Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd that Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbās ؓ asked him, "Why did he not embrace Isalm in the days of the Prophet?" He replied, "My father had given a manuscript of Torah and advised me to follow it. He had sealed all other books so that I may not read them, and also took a pledge from me on the plea of paternity that I would not break those seals. But when Islam began to spread all over the world I thought my father might have tried to conceal some important knowledge from me, and I broke the seals and studied those books. In them I found the mention of Muḥammad and his people, and accepted Islam."[22]

Ka'b al-Aḥbār رحمة الله عليه has generally been regarded as reliable but 'Allāmah Muḥammad Zahid al-Kawtharī has expressed doubts on the basis of some of his narrations. For instance, when Sayyidina 'Umar ؓ intended to build the Masjid Al-Aqsa, he sought the opinion of the people whether it should be built in front of the Sakhrah Baitul Maqdis or behind it? Ka'b-al-Aḥbār advised him to construct it behind the Mosque Sakhrah. On this Sayyidina 'Umar ؓ said, "Son of a Jew woman, the influence of

22: قال الكوثرى {Al-Kawtharī has commented on the authenticity of this narration.} Maqālāt Al-Kawtharī p32.

Judaism has still not worn out over you. I shall construct it in front of Sakhrah so that Sakhrah is not faced by Muslims during Ṣalāh." Zahid Al-Kawtharī has written that Ka'b al-Aḥbār kept grudge against Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ after this incident, so much so, that he was seen in company with those people who killed Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ. Before the incident he had warned Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ with reference to some inscriptions in the books of Jews and Christians that he ('Umar) would be killed. After quoting all such evidences, 'Allāmah al-Kawthari has written:

> "On looking at these separate events, it becomes evident that Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ, Abu Zarr Ibn-'Abbās, Awf bin Mālik and Mu'āwiyah did not fully trust Ka'b al-Aḥbār."[23]

There may be grounds for a difference with 'Allāmah al-Kawtharī when he casts doubts on Ka'b al-Aḥbār especially when we see them in the light of the sayings of the Companions,[24] but one thing is certain that most of Ka'b's narrations are Isra'ilites and they cannot be relied upon unless confirmed through other sources.

## WAHB BIN MUNABBIH

He also came from Sanā in Yemen and was Persian by origin. He is also one of those to whom many Israiliyats are attributed. He has been reported to have been born during the Caliphate of Sayyidina 'Uthman ﷺ.[25] His father, had embraced Islam during the days of the Prophet ﷺ. Wahb bin Munabbih was a pious Tabi'ī and he was an ascetic. He has reported from Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'īd

23: Maqālāt al-Kawtharī pp33-34, article on Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Israilities.

24: The Research scholar of Egypt Doctor Ramzi Na'nā' has rejected these doubts. (Al-Israiliyyat wa-atharuha fit Tafsīr, pp.172-183, Beirut 1970).

25: Tazkirat al-huffāẓ, v1, p101

Khudri, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās and Jabir رضی الله تعالی عنهم. He had a vast knowledge, gained from the scholars of the people of the Book, their books and narrations. He considered himself to be equal in knowledge to 'Abdullah bin Salām and Ka'b al-Aḥbār together. According to Imām Ibn Sa'd he had also published a book named *Aḥādith ul-Anbiya* containing all those narrations.[26] al-Mas'ūdi has mentioned that Wahb had written a book named *Al-Mabda*.[27]

It is perhaps this very book that Ḥajī Khalīfah has referred to as *Kitāb ul Isra'īliyyāt* in his *Kashfuẓ Ẓunūn*.[28] Yaqūt al Ḥamawī and Ibn Khallikan have credited him with another book named *Zikrul Mulūk-al-Maftūḥah Min Ḥimyar-wa-Akhbāruhum waghair Zalik.* Ibn Khallikan had seen the book.[29]

The Traditionalists and research scholars have not questioned his trustworthiness. Ḥāfiẓ Zahabī رحمة الله عليه says, "He was reliable and truthful, but reported a great deal from Isra'ilite books." Imām Abu Zar'ah and Imām Nasā'ī have called him as "Reliable". Imām 'Ijlī has said, "Wahb was a reliable Tābi'ī." Only Imām Amr bin Ali al-Falās has considered him as "weak" not because he doubted Wahb's truthfulness and trustworthiness but the reason was that in the early period Wahb was inclined towards the Qadriyyah beliefs. Imām Aḥmad has stated that Wahb had later repented from his misgivings. Abu Sinān has quoted Wahb himself that he had subscribed to Qadri beliefs but later relented.[30]

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26: Ṭabqāt Ibn Sa'd v7, p97.
27: Murawwaj az-Zahabi v5, p127.
28: Dr 'Abdul Azīz ad-Dawri Behath fī Nashāti 'Ilmut Tārīkh p114.
29: Mua'jam al-Udaba', Ḥamawī v6, p.222 and wafyāt al'Ayān, Ibn Khallikan. v2, p180.
30: Tahzīb ul Tahzīb v11, p168.

It is obvious from this discussion that none of the scholars of *Ḥadīth* has ever doubted his truthfulness, trustworthiness and reliability. It was on this basis that both Bukhari and Muslim have included his narrations in their books. Hence the narrations which he has attributed to the Prophet ﷺ shall be accepted if precedences conform to the principles of the Science of *Ḥadith*. However, his stories of the past and predictions about the future described without authentic references are mostly Isra'ilites which we have been directed neither to confirm nor to deny. Some authors of the present time, for instance, Sayyid Rasheed Raza have regarded him as a "*weak*" narrator on the basis of his strange Isra'ilite narrations. But the fact is that just mentioning the Judaic is no crime. It is, however, a different matter that Islamic dogma and commands cannot be based on them.[31]

## 'ABDULLAH BIN 'AMR ؓ

Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb bin Munabbih are among the Tabiʿīn and most of the Isra'ilite narrations have been reported by them. Among the Companions probably most of Isra'iliyats have been reported by 'Abdullah bin 'Amr.' The reason is that he had thoroughly learnt the Syrian language[32] and at that time many of the books of Jews and Christians could be had in the Syrian language. After the battle of Yarmūk he got such a large number of those books which formed two camel loads. He has reported several traditions from the Holy Prophet ﷺ too but they have no connection with Isra'iliyāt. In fact, if they stand the test of authentic narrations they should be accepted just as the *Aḥādith* of other Companions. However, the narrations cited by him from Judaica shall neither be confirmed nor

31: The view of Sayyid Rasheed Raza and others is duly rejected by Dr. Ramzī Na'naʿin Isrāiliyyāt wa Atharuhā fit Tafsīr, p188.
32: Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd v4 p261.

denied. Similarly, the narrations reported as his own adages seem to be Isra'iliyats and cannot form the basis of Islamic beliefs. An Egyptan rejector of *Ḥadith*, Abu Raiyyah has levelled a baseless accussation on 'Abdullah bin 'Amr in his book *Aḍwāʾ 'Alas Sunnat il Muḥammadiyah* that he sometimes attributed Isra'ilite narrations towards Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. This allegation is absolutely wrong and exposes the dishonest intentions of Abu Raiyyah. He has based his allegation on the following phrase of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar from his book Fath-ul-Bāri:

ان عبد الله بن عمرو كان قد اصاب زاملتين من كتب اهل الكتاب و كان يرويها للناس عن النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم فتجنب الاخذ عنه كثير من ائمة التابعين و كان يقال له "لا تحدثنا عن الزاملتين" -

'Abdullah Bin 'Amr had obtained two camel loads of books of the People of the Book. *He used to narrate to people from these books by attributing them towards the Prophet* ﷺ. That is why many of the Tābi'ī scholars avoided citing him and people used to say to him not to relate to them anything of the two camel loads."[33]

In this phrase the underlined sentence in italics is not found in Ibn Hajar's Fatḥ-ul-Bārī. Abu Raiyyah has inserted this sentence on his own and attributed it to Ibn Ḥajar. One can easily see through the rejectors of Aḥādith western-minded authors.[34]

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33: Fath-ul-Bāri v1, p166.

34: An outright rejection of the stand of Abu Raiyyah may be observed in al Sunnatal lāhi deen Doctor 'Ajjaj al-khateeb and al-Israiliyyāt wā-thir-hā fi kitābit Tafsīr Dr Ramzi Na'nā'ah.

## 2. EXEGESIS OF THE SUFĪS (MYSTICS)

Certain words of the honourable sufīs about the verse of the Qurān which may seem to be an exegesis but those words contradict the obvious meanings. For instance, the Qurān says,

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِيْنَ يَلُوْنَكُمْ مِّنَ الْكُفَّارِ

Fight those of the disbelievers who gird around you.

(At-Tawbah, 9:123)

About it some Sufīs have said

قاتلوا النفس فانها تلى الانسان

"Fight your soul because it is nearest to man."

Some people have taken such sentences as interpretations of the Qurān, but in fact they are not so. The Sufīs never meant that these represent the actual intentions of the Qurān and not the meanings that are apparent. Rather they have full faith in the apparent meanings proved from its original sources and admit this to be the true interpretation of the Qurān, but alongwith it they also give vent to the ecstatic feelings they sense during the recital of the verse. Hence, the Sufīs do not say that the foregoing verse does not advocate *jihad* against the unbelievers. What they mean to express is that while the verse in fact calls on us to fight the unbelievers, at the same time it tells us that nearest enemy is his own soul that repeatedly prompts him to commit evil. Hence, he must engage in *Jihad* with it also at the same time as he is bound to wage *Jihad* with the disbelievers.

We find a large number of such intuitive interpretations of the Sufīs in the Exegesis of renowned commentator 'Allāmah Maḥmūd Alūsi. He has explained the views of

the Sufis in the following words.

"The deliberations reported from the Sufis in connection with the Quran in fact point to those deep and fine disclosures that they read in it. These disclosures are truly based on the apparent meaning. The Sufis do not believe that the apparent meanings are to be ignored against intuitive meanings because this is the belief of the *Bāṭiniyyah* apostates who have adopted it as stepping stone to negate the Laws of Islam. Our mystics have nothing to do with this belief, and it cannot be, because they insist that the apparent meanings of the Quran must be adopted first."[35]

But, the following considerations must be kept in mind in regard to such deliberations of the mystics.

1: These deliberations should not be regarded as exegesis of the Quran, we should believe that the true exegesis of the Quran is the one that is apparent from its real source, and these deliberations are just intuitive deductions which cannot be regarded as exegesis without going astray. Imam 'Abdur Raḥmān Sulmī رحمة الله عليه had written a book, *Ḥaqā'iqut Tafsīr* which consisted of such deliberations. Imām Wāḥidī رحمة الله عليه has said about it that, "whoever believes that this is Tafsīr would become an apostate."[36]

2: Of all such deliberations only those may be taken as correct which do not negate the apparent meanings of a verse or an established principle of Islamic Law. If the established rules and regulations of religion are defied under the guise of intuitive deliberations it is

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35: Ruh-ul-Ma'āni v1,p7 Introduction. 'Allāmah Suyūṭi has reproduced the same material from Shaikh Tājuddin bin 'Ataullah. (Al-Itqān, v2,p185).

36: Al-Itqān, v2,p184.

open apostasy.

3: Intuitions of this kind would be reliable only so long as they do not interpolate the words of Qurān. If anything is connoted by distorting the word of the Qurān then that is also apostasy and a wavering from the path. For instance, take the verse. من ذا الذی یشفع (Who is he that shall intercede). Someone said about it that it is actually من ذل ذی یشفع where ذی means "soul" giving the phrase the meaning."Whoever shall disgrace the soul shall be cured. Remember it." When 'Allāmah Sirajuddin Bāqillanī was asked about it he said. "Such a person is a heretic."[37]

4: In the earlier times, there was a group of heritics named '*Bāṭiniyyah*' They claimed that in fact Allah did not mean what is understood in the Qurān on the face of it, but every word points to an intrinsic meaning which is its true interpretation. Such a belief is unanimously regarded apostasy by the *Ummah*. Hence, it will amount to subscribing to the misconceived ideas of. '*Bāṭiniyyat*' if we attribute such a belief to the deliberations of the Sufīs.

The deliberations of the mystics (Sufīs) can be studied with due regard to these four cautionary notes. Indeed, some people having an ideal bent of mind have benefitted from these deliberations. That is why 'Allāmah Ālusī has devoted an entire chapter named *Bab-ul-Isharah fil Āyāt* in his Tafsīr Rūḥul Ma'ānī in which he has mentioned such intuitions.

To sum up, the intuitive deliberations made by the Sufīs are not against the Qurān or *Sunnah*, and to blame them for *Bāṭiniyah* is not justified. In spite of that, we cannot resist quoting Ibn-us Ṣalāh:

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37: Itqān v2, p 184.

ومع ذلك فياليتهم لم يتساهلوا بمثل ذلك لما فيه من الابهام والالباس (الاتقان، ١٨٤، ج٢)

"Despite this, how I wish these people had not been so careless in delving upon these delibertions because there is much possibility of creating misunderstanding and doubt through them.[38]

## 3. SELF-CONCEIVED INTERPRETATIONS

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

من تكلم فى القران برأيه فاصاب فقد اخطأ

Whoever comments on the Qurān on the basis of his own opinion and even if his opinion, is correct still he committed a mistake.

'Allāmah Māwardī رحمة الله عليه has stated that some people with a mischievous bent of mind assert that this tradition makes it unlawful to say anything about the Qurān on the basis of one's opinion and thinking. They go to the extent in saying that even meanings cannot be derived at in accordance with the principles of *Shari'ah*. But this is a misconception because the Qurān itself has described deliberations and deductions a praiseworthy effort. If restrictions are imposed on the thinking and deliberation, the door to deduce laws and regulations from the Qurān and *Sunnah* will be closed for ever. Hence this tradition does not intend to restrict every kind of self-conceived opinion.[39]

There is a consensus among the scholars that, in the light of the Qurān and *Ḥadith*, this tradition does not

38: Al-Itqān v2, p184.
39: Adopted from al-Itqān, v2, p180.

disallow one to think, deliberate and reason in studying the Qurān. But an exegesis arrived at only by personal opinion and ignoring the established principles of exegesis of the Qurān, shall be unlawful, and any person drawing conclusions in this manner shall be committing a sin even if his conclusions are correct because he took a wrong approach. There can be several ways in which a person may ignore the principles of exegesis. These are:

1: Anyone who is not competent to talk about the exegesis of the Qurān may interpret it through his own deliberations.

2: Anyone may ignore an explanation of a verse explicitly proved from the Prophet ﷺ or his Companions and their followers (Tabi'īn), and forward his own opinion as final.

3: Someone may make an interpretation ignoring usage, literature and lexicon when an explicit interpretation from the companions and Tabi'īn is not reported.

4: Someone may extract rulings from the Qurān although he is not competent to do so directly from the Qurān and *Ḥadith*.

5: Someone may infer from the verses of the Qurān the meanings of which the Qurān itself states that these are known to none but Allah alone and then stands by his inference.

6: He may draw an interpretation of the verses of the Qurān which clash with other established belief and tenets of Islam.

7: Where personal deliberation and deduction is permissible one may declare his own unsubstantiated opinion as conclusive and at the same time firmly negate the deliberations of other scholars.

These are the possibilities of an exegesis on personal opinion which the foregoing *Ḥadith* declares illegal. All

these possibilies are summed up in another saying of the Prophet ﷺ.

من قال في القرآن بغير علم فليتبوأ مقعده من النار

"Whoever says anything about the Qurān wihtout knowledge, let him make his place in the Fire (of Hell)."

However, if an opinion is expressed which is not against the Qurān and *Ḥadith* and conforms to the principles of exegesis and established rules and regulations of Islam, it does not attract the wrath of this *Ḥadith*. But it must be undersood that such deliberations themselves are not possible without a deep knowledge of the Qurān and *Ḥadith* and experience in Islamic Sciences. The scholars have laid down certain principles for this purpose, which form part of the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence and principles of exegesis. A very useful summary of these principles has been given by 'Allāmah Badruddin Zarkashī in his book *Al-burhān-fi-ulūm-il-Qurān*, in the 41st edition particularly under 'kinds of Tafsīr'. (pp 164-170)

This entire discussion is very useful but one cannot benefit from it without a sound knowledge of Arabic and its sciences. Hence, we do not see any advantage in presenting its translation here.

# CAUSES OF INACCURACIES IN EXEGESIS

While it is respectful and honourable to pursue. the science of exegesis (Tafsīr),it is also dangerours to step into it. The reason for that is that if anyone makes a wrong interpretation he would attribute towards Allah a thing which He has not said, and there can be no greater deviation than that. Those who expound the Qurān without being properly qualified fall into the wrong path in spite of labouring much in the exercise. Hence, it is essential to have a view of the causes that mislead a man in the matter of exegesis of the Qurān.

## FIRST CAUSE: INCOMPETENCE

The first and the most dangerous cause of erring off the path while engaging in the exegesis of the Qurān is to impose one's opinion without assessing one's competence and ability. Lately, it is seen that this habit has assumed epidemic proportions. It has beome a common misconception that by being able to read Arabic one becomes a scholar on the Qurān and can interpret the Qurān as he understands it. It is worth observing that while there is no art or science in the world wherein a person becomes an expert only by virtue of his linguistic knowledge and ability yet this is ignored when dealing with the Qurān. No sensible man would claim to have become a physician or surgeon simply because he has a full command on English language and play with the lives of his patients. Merely reading a book on medical science will not make anyone a doctor. Similarly, a person cannot

claim to be an Engineer simply by reading books on Engineering, or lawyer merely by reading books on Law. If anybody claims to be a professional on this basis he will be termed a quack and an idiot because everyone knows that the arts and sciences cannot be achieved simply by being acquainted with the language and by self study. It needs years of hard work and tuition under expert teachers in the field leading through several examination conducted by institutions of learning. It is followed by practical experience under supervision and company of specialists. Only then one would be entitled to be called a beginner in the science.

If this is the case with learning these arts and sciences how can anyone hope to become an expert in the science of exegesis of the Qurān simply by knowing Arabic language? In the preceding pages, we have seen what vast a knowledge is required to be able to enter the domain of the science of Exegesis. The Qurān is not a continuous book like other ordinary books where everything about one subject may be found at one place. Unlike all other books it has a unique and distinguished style. Hence, in order to fully understand the meaning of a verse it is necessary to keep in view its different recitals, other verses on the same subject and their related information, the revelationary background. It is also necessary to know the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ on which depends the interpretation of many verses. We shall have to find out if there is a deed or saying of the Prophet ﷺ that explains the verse, and if it stands the test of authenticity. Also one should know how the Companions understood this verse, and whether there was a consensus on it or a difference of opinion existed among them. In case of a difference of opinion how may that be solved? Further, Aarabic is a rich language, its words have many meanings and several synonyms.

It is also essential to be familar with the idiom of that era to understand the meaning of the verse. Besides, the meaning of a verse, it is not sufficient to have a knowledge of only the literal meaning of a word because in Arabic language the meanings change with the change in grammatical composition and diactrical marks. Without due proficiency in Arabic literature and language, this knowledge cannot be acquired and the composition nearest to the language of that day cannot be determined. Lastly, it must be thoroughly understood that the Qurān is Word of Allah, and Allah does not disclose the secrets and mysteries of His words to those who are disobedient to Him. Hence, obedience to Allah, close attachment with Him, piety and righteousness are essential qualities in man before he sets to interpreting the Qurān. This discussion makes it clear that mere familiarity with Arabic is not enough to explain the Qurān. One must study the principles governing Tafsīr, science of *Ḥadith* principles governing *Ḥadith* and jurisprudence, knowledge of syntax, grammar, etymology, literature and rhetoric, Coupled with purity of heart, mind and body and deep devotion to Allah (*Taqwa*).

To adopt the path of exegesis without meeting these conditions is to mislead oneself and qualify oneself as one of whom the Prophet ﷺ had said,

من قال فى القران بغير علم فليتبوأ مقعده من النار

Whosoever says anything about the Qurān without knowledge let him make his place in the Fire (of Hell).

## SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS

In this connection some misunderstandings must be removed.

1: Some people say that the Qurān has itself stated:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ ۝

> Certainly We made the Quran easy for admonition but is there anyone who would be admonished.
>
> (Al-Qamar, 54:17)

So when the Quran is an easy book there is no need for help from arts and sciences to interpret it. Every one should be able to understand it by reading its text.

This argument is a grave misunderstanding which is based on lack of intellect and on superficial viewpoint. The fact is that the Quranic verses are of two types. Firstly, those which offer common advice, didactic events, and subjects that deal with taking warning and acting on sound advice. For instance there are verses that speak of morality of the world, account of Paradise and Hell, verses that inspire fear of God, concern for the Hereafter and other plain facts of life. Verses of this type are no doubt easy and anyone knowing Arabic language can benefit from them.

In fact this purpose can be achieved to some extent even after going through the recognised translations of the Quran. The verse under reference has pointed out to this very fact, which is apparent from the word للذكر (for the sake of admonition).

Contrary to this, there are verses which consist of injunctions, regulations, beliefs and scholastic subjects. It is not possible for just anyone to understand them and deduce and draw tenets from them unless a deep insight in the Islamic learnings is attained first. That is why the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ used to spend long periods of time regularly in learning the Quran from him even though their mother tongue was Arabic and they did not have to go anywhere to get training in Arabic. Suyuṭi has quoted 'Abdur Raḥman Sulami that

he was told by the Companions such as Sayyidina 'Uthmān bin 'Affān and 'Abdullah Bin Mas'ūd ؓ, who had regularly learnt the Qurān from the Prophet ﷺ that they would not proceed beyond ten verses until they had obtained all the relevant knowledge and practical application of these verses. They used to say:

فتعلمنا القران والعلم والعمل جميعا۔

> We have learnt the Qurān, knowledge and action all in one.

It is narrated in Mu'attā of Imām Mālik that 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar took eight years to memorise and learn *Surah Al-Baqarah* alone, and in Musnad Aḥmad, Sayyidina Anas ؓ has stated that the one among them who had learnt *Surah Al-Baqarah*... and *Al-'Imrān* enjoyed high esteem and status.[40]

It is worth observing that these Companions used to take such a long time as eight years to learn and memorise just one *Surah* though their mother tongue was Arabic. They had the highest degree of expertise in poetry and literature and could commit to memory lengthy odes with only a little effort. The only reason (was) that a proficiency in Arabic language was not enough for learning the Qurān and its sciences, but they had to seek the benefit of the company and teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When such was the state of affairs with the Companions who had expertise in Arabic language and were direct witnesses to revelation, how then could some one claim to be a commentator of the Qurān with a cursory knowledge of Arabic or just by reading translations of the Qurān. Such a claim is indeed audacious and a pitiable jest with the Qurān. Such people

40: Al-Itqān, v2, p176.

should remember the Prophet's ﷺ saying:

من قال فى القران بغير علم فليتبوأ مقعده فى النار

(ابو داؤد، منقول از اتقان، ص ۱۷۹، ج۲)

> Whosoever says anything about the Qurān without knowledge[41] let him make his abode in the Fire (of Hell).

## THE 'ULAMĀ AND MONOPOLY IN THE FIELD

2: Some people raise the objection that since the Qurān is guidance for all mankind, hence every one has a right to derive benefit from it according to his understanding. Its explanations and interpretations cannot be monopolised by the scholars and learned ones.

But this, too is a very superficial and sentimental objection that has nothing to do with reality. No doubt the Qurān is the source of guidance for the entire humanity but how does it mean that even an illiterate person may formulate intricate laws and rulings from it, and that no competency is essential for this. This can be understood with the help of an example: Suppose an expert lawyer or philosopher or doctor writes a book on his subject, obvioulsly it is meant to be of use to the entire mankind. If, now, a beginner unaware of the basics of these arts and sciences objects that since those books were written for the benefit of all mankind, why have the experts monopolised it. We can only feel sorry for the man. If defining basic qualifications for competency to benefit from a book is to monopolise the field then no art or science can remain safe from the hold of the illiterate and inept. In fact every book

41: Abu Daūd, as referred to in Al-Itqān v2, p179.

of art or science is written for the benefit of mankind, but there are only two ways in which a man may gain the advantage. He may either learn the art or science from specialists in these fields and devote time and effort to it, or if he cannot do so, he may rely on the explanations and interpretations of those who have spent their lives in attaining proficiency in them . Anyone who takes a third course at the expense of these two is actually unjust to himself and to the science or art too. The same applies to Qurān and *Sunnah* which are a fountain source of guidance to all mankind. The same two approaches are possible to gain advantage from them, either one acquires the knowledge himself through the proper process under teachers and by devoting time to it, or rely on explanations and interpretations of those who have given their time for the sake of this science. This is the principle of learning applied all over the world, and to call it a Monopoly is nothing but to ridicule the 'Ulamā in a sentimental outburst. Of all the learnings in the world, are the Qurān and *Sunnah* alone, an unclaimed field of enquiry, that need no competence in order to interpret them and anyone who likes may pass opinions in this matter?

## THE 'ULAMĀ AND THE PAPAL SYSTEM

3: The same objection is raised by some people in a different manner. They say that Papalism is alien to Islam. It is a peculiarity of the Christian faith that interpretation of the Bible is the exclusive right of the Pope and no one else can object to it. Islam has done away with the papal system. How then could the rights of exegesis of the Qurān be reserved for a particular section of the people, the 'Ulamā?

This objection is the result of a misconception about both the Papalism and scholars of Islam, the 'Ulamā. The

'Ulamā is not a name of any particular or specific group of people based on colour and creed, wealth and property or status and position, nor is it a regular organisation the membership of which may be essential to be called a religious scholar. On the contrary, every one having specific knowledge, wisdom, character and piety is a religious scholar irrespective of the place he belongs to, the language he speaks and his family background. In this way the following clear characteristics distinguish the scholars of Islam and Popes of Christianity.

i) Papalism is the name of a complex religious system which is bound to a fixed international organisation. It has a large number of offices and posts and the number of incumbents is limited. Appointment of a person to every office or post is made by a group of specified persons and they assign various duties and powers to appointees. No one may obtain an appointment merely, on the basis of his ability, knowledge, piety or character. Nomination by the higher authorities is the only way to assume office. Unless he has attained an office in the organisation, he will have no say in any religious matter, however, highly placed he may be in religious learning, piety and character. The result is that a person who has attaineed the highest degree of proficiency in religious sciences cannot challenge the strong hierarchy of the Church through reasoning and argument. Even if a selected group of people revolt against their divine books, their Prophets and their ancestors, nobody outside the organisation can raise a finger on them.

In contrast to this, there has never been an international organisation of "The Scholars of Islam", the 'Ulamā. There is no such organisation which prohibits expression of veiws to those outside it, and

limits authority of its officers and appropriates to itself the right of appointments. Rather, every such person gains fame and becomes entitled to be called a religious scholar an 'Ālim, on the basis of his knowledge, piety, devotion and character. The authorities of the Church prevail upon their flock with their opinions by virtue of their official status but a Muslim scholar attains his position through his knowledge, piety and character. The enforced laws of the Church bind man to follow them but among the Muslims the real decisive force is the collective conscience of the *Ummah*. The number of officers of the Church is limited and once that is attained no one is entitled to differ from the decisions of the Church, no matter how great a scholar he may be. The "Religious Scholars of Islam", the 'Ulāma, have no fixed number. Every one can become a scholar once he has gone through the process of religious learnings.

ii) In Papalism the powers of interpretation and exegesis of religious tenets rest with a single person who is called the Pope. He is elected by only seventy cardinals out of millions of followers of that religion. The Pope is the sole vicegerant of St. Peter, the final authority in all religious matters, and his interpretations are binding on every Christian. His word is the Law and even the greatest scholar has no right to differ from him. His powers have been defined in Encyclopaedia Britannica in the following words:

"Hence, in matters of belief and concepts the Pope, in the capacity of supreme authority enjoys the same authority and the same infallibility as the entire Church. In the capacity of legislator and judge he enjoys all those powers which the whole Church has."[42]

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42: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Article on Pope v18, p222,223.

Turn the pages of Islamic history and you will not find a single instance of a religious scholar making claim to such an absolute authority.

iii) According to Christian beliefs the Pope is innocent and infallible when he proclaims ideological rulings. The Britannica says:

"Hence, the Pope has two distinctive attributes. One, that whenever, he makes a proclamation about beliefs, he is infallible and free from errors; and two he has a sovereign jurisdiction over all the followers of religion. These two prerogatives that the Popes have claimed and used since centuries, have been given a clear constitutional shape in the Vatican Council of July 1870."[43]

As opposed to this, the scholars of Islam are all agreed that nobody except the Prophets عليهم السلام can be infallible and innocent. Everyone else may err. Hence, the scholars of Islam have been commenting on each other with full freedom of expression, and this is in practice since the time of the Companions. The result is that even if the greatest scholar of Islam errs in interpreting the Qurān and *Sunnah*, the other 'Ulamā censure him and save the *Ummah* from the evil repurcussions.

iv) Further, the seventy Cardinals that select the Pope and advise him are all nominated by the Pope himself. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica:

"Now-a-days the nomination of the Cardinals is the job of Pope alone. The job is regarded as complete on the publication of the names selected by the Pope in secrecy, and it does not require any other formality....similarly it is not essential for it

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43: Encyclopaedia Britannica v18, p223 also see the article on Infallibility.

to be voted or approved by the Sacred College."[44]

Then again these authorities of the Church are not appointed only by virture of their ability but several regional prejudices prevail in different regions. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says:

> "In the United States of America, the Church is composed of different groups of every nation in the world. But the English speaking nations are in majority. Till the middle of 19th century Irish and German nations had the maximum quota.... In addition, Eastern Catholic nations (i.e. Greek, Syrians and Armenians,) are present in a considerable ratio."[45]

After this brief introduction if we compare Papalism with Islamic scholars we find a world of difference between the two. There is no established Organisation of the Scholars of Islam, no single person is the superme authority in religious matters, nobody does claim to be innocent and infallible, a number is not limited for them to prevent their increase in the numbers of the 'Ulamā, none of the 'Ulamā is above criticism by the others, no approval required from a "Single Person" to attain the scholar status, there is no restriction of caste, creed, colour or place for it. In fact the history of Islam shows that mostly the Arabs led in the political domain but religious scholars were generally from non-Arabs and even from the slaves, whom the entire Islamic world had acknowledged for their learning, knowledge, piety and devotion. Thus it is most unjust to blame the 'Ulamā for adopting the Papal system when they assert that insight and experience is necessary for speaking on the Qurān and *Sunnah*.[46]

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44: Encyclopaedia Britannica v4, p855 on Cardinal.

45: Ibid v19, p421 (Roman Catholic Church)

46: (See on next Page)

In fact the religious science is like the other sciences. Just as the verdict of a person on any other art or science will not be accepted unless he has attained the concerned knowledge from experts in that field and has also gained practical experience in it, the interpretation and exegesis of the Qurān would not be acceptable from a person who has not attained knowledge from expert teachers and practised it under their supervision. If this is Papalism, then every art or science of the world is Papalism, too.

## SECOND CAUSE:

## SUBJECTING THE QURĀN TO ONE'S OWN VIEWS

The second grave aberrance in connection with the exegesis of the Qurān is that a person first conceives certain ideas in his mind and then attempts to interpret the Qurān according to those ideas. This has been pointed out by Allamah Ibn Taymiyyah.[47]

Irreligious people and those impressed by the philosophy of their time, have from earlier times, adopted the same misleading method for exegesis of the Qurān, and tried to interpolate the words of the Qurān to suit their own views. This behaviour does not conform to any standard of justice and righteousness in any matter, and it is cruel to adopt it in connection with the Qurān such as

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(Foot note of Previous page.)

46: Here we only intend to point out the differences between the scholars of Islam and Popes. To deal with the merits and demerits of Papalism is outside the scope of our subject. In fact, the propaganda of the Protestants has pointed out to actual defects of Papalism they have also made certain unfounded allegations only to defame the system. But we are not concerned with that discussion at this point. (Muhammad Taqī)

47: Usūl ut Tafsīr, Ibn Taymiyyah Maktaba 'Ilmiyah- Lahore.

nothing could be more cruel than this. The Qurān has declared itself frequently a book of "Guidance". "Guidance" means "To show the way to a person who has lost his destination." Hence, in order to get Guidance from the Qurān it is essential that one should keep his mind open like the one who does not know his destination, and his mind is blank. Thereafter, he should have faith that the way shown by the Qurān will be the way for reform and prosperity for him even if his limited mind cannot reason it. He may tell himself if he were capable he would not have turned to the Qurān in the first place. When anyone turns towards it with this belief and fulfils the required conditions and etiquette necessary for getting the "Guidance" of the Qurān, he will surely get it and achieve his goal.

Contrary to this, if somebody has predetermined concepts in his mind based on his personal whims and then goes through the Qurān with this frame of mind it would mean that he is not reading the sacred Book of Allah to get guidance but only to find support for his personal views. Obviously one who relies on his own intellect and does not subject it to the Qurān but (God forbid) suppresses the Qurān to his intellect, the Qurān is not under obligation to guide him. Such a person would not get any guidance from the Qurān and rather than reach his destination would be caught in the labyrinth of waywardness. It is for these people that the Qurān has said:

يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا

> Allah sends many astray thereby; and He guides many thereby. (Al-Baqarah, 2:76)

Hence the correct method of gaining guidance from the Qurān is to turn towards it like a seeker of Truth after

foreeing one's mind of bias and prejudices. One should acquire the knowledge required to understand it and then seek to interpret it. Then believe like a true believer in whatever he learns of the Tafsīr. As for the one who cannot afford to undergo this process or does not have confidence on his personal views, he should rely on the interpretations of those who have spent their lives on this study and whose insight, piety and character are unquestioned in his eyes.

## THIRD CAUSE

### Being impressed with prevailing Philosophy

The third great wrong approach in the exegesis of the Qurān is to turn towards the Qurān after being overawed by the philosophical and intellectual concepts of the times setting them as standard for right and wrong and accordingly explaining the Qurān. This aberrance is actually part of the second cause but we give it a separate classification because in the current era, Western influence is playing havoc with our social conduct.

In the history of Islam there have always been some people who have felt impressed by the philosophy of their times without first acquiring proficiency in the science of Qurān and Sunnah. The philosophy impressed them to such an extent that they became deprived of the ability to think independently. When they turned towards the Qurān with this mind they found much against their ideal philosophy and they started interpreting the Qurān in that light rather than negate their own concepts. They tried to after the words of Qurān to fit their views.

The same thing happened when the Greek philosophy became popular among Muslims. They studied it without first studying the science of the Qurān and *Sunnah*. Some people who had been overawed by that philosophy started to distort the Qurānic concepts to accommodate

the Greek Philosophy. Some of them did it sincerely, and truly believed that the Greek philosophy could not be contradicted and the inherited interpretations of the Qurān would not be able to face the intellectual revolution brought about by the Greek Philosophy. So they hoped to accommodate the Tafsīr of the Qurān to Greek ideas, But this was a disfavour to Islam and only created an ideological confusion rather than do any real service to Islam. It created new sects, such as *Mu'tazilah* and *Jahmiyyah*. The result was that the *Mu'tazillah* scholars of Islam who were never impressed by any system or new concept brought against Islam, had to devote their time to contradict such people at the expense of the religious service. They pointed out to the intellectual drawbacks of the Greek Philosophy and thus contradicted, with detailed arguments, the deliberations of those who were interpolating the meanings of the Qurān under the influence of this philosophy. Thus, debates, discussions and literary writings became everyday affair, and book-loads of libraries came up supporting one view or the other.

The authentic scholars held that the Qurān was not any human product but it comprised the words of the Creator of this Universe Who was Aware of the minutest occurences in this world, and no one else could be better informed than Him about the changing circumstances of this world. Hence, the teachings of the Qurān and the facts it reveals are universal, eternal and unchangeable. As for the laws, injunctions and ideologies that may change with the times, the Qurān has laid down comprehensive principles about them to be applicable at all times, and guidance may be obtained from them in every environment. But the things that are explicitly described by the Qurān or explicitly interpreted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ are not affected by the

changing times.

History of science and philosophy testifies that their theories most of which are not based on definite observation keep changing in different times. The prevailing theories so enraptured minds that people were not prepared to listen to anything against those theories. But when fresh findings disproved them they were disgraced and regarded outmoded. The same happened to new concepts that replaced the older ones and the successive concepts. This has continued in the intellectual history of man and it will go on until the search for reality brings him face to face with absolute observation. Contrary to this, the realities towards which the Qurān has explicitly guided are presented by a Being who sees the entire universe and the happenings in it. Therefore, the temporary theories of science and philosophy cannot hold against the guidance of the Qurān. If one is impressed by a concept of the moment and then tries to mould the Qurān according to it, the same concept may turn out to be a relic of the days of ignorance, and one would feel ashamed to mention it even.

This resolute stand taken by the determined scholars came out to be true. Advancements in Science and Philosophy have shattered the theories of the Greak Philosophy. Not only many of its natural, basic and astronomical concepts have been proved wrong but the structure of metaphysical concepts raised on their basis has also fallen to the ground. Those people who had been impressed by it and tried to mould the Qurān and *Sunnah* according to it, if they had been alive today, would have been ashamed and abashed.

However, it is very surprising that those who always take a narrow approach try, even today, to explain the Qurān and *Sunnah*, in the frame of the western mind rather than learn from history. They are bent on ignoring the

established and accepted principles of exegesis. They strive to adopt only one principle and that is to eke out meanings in the words of Allah that fit the western mind. They do not care whose words they are interpolating? They do not give a thought how durable the ideologies are for whose sake they play with the words of Allah.

They do not worry what would happen to their interpolations once fresh ideas overrun them.

## THE QUESTION OF MIRACLES

A famous western philosopher disclosed the law of Absorption in seventeenth century, a theory about the Universe and everything in it gained Universal popularity. This was known as Mechanical Concept of Life. In plain language it can be summarised in the words that the entire universe is so bound together in the system of Cause and Effect that it cannot deviate even a hair's breadth from it. For example, the nature of fire is to burn, and it is not possible to separate this nature from the fire. Hence it can never happen that while fire is raging yet it does not burn things which it should because of its nature.

When this view was acknowledge the world over the western thinkers began to ridicule every such incident that did not follow this rule and came to be called Super Natural, and went against their theory of Cause and Effect. So they declared as 'Superstition' every thing that did not observe natural process. More than the theory the ridicule with which they held the Super Natural overawed the Revivalists of Islam. When they found that most of the miracles of the Prophets عليهم السلام mentioned in the Qurān do not conform with these theories they began to twist the words of the Qurān in a manner that these miracles may be said to follow natural phenomena rather be irregular and deem to be 'Super Natural'. It would then not attract

western ridicule. For instance, it is the nature of Fire according to the "Cause and Effect" theory, to burn but the Qurān asserts that the Fire was cooled down when Prophet Ibrāhim ﷺ was thrown into it. Confronted with this assertion, some Revivalists of Islam have just denied the occurrence of the incident. They played with the words of Qurān in such a manner that they completely changed the meanings of the Qurān which no scholar of the Qurān and *Sunnah* could imagine for the last thirteen centuries. Thus, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khan violated the established consensus of the Muslim *Ummah* and tried to find excuses for his interpolation. He writes:

> "In their times (that is the times of earlier scholars of Islam) 'Natural Senses' had not developed. There was nothing to tell them of the Law of Nature and stop them from erring." Hence these causes and similar other causes were such that they (the scholars) could not pay due attention to these words of the Qurān. For instance....there is no conclusive evidence about the story of Sayyidina Ibrahim ﷺ that he was actually thrown into the fire, but they did not observe it.[48]

But the fact is that apart from Prophetic Traditions and narrations, the words of the Qurān about this incident are:

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانْصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِيْنَ ○ قُلْنَا يَانَارُ كُونِيْ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ ○ وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِيْنَ ○

They said "Burn him and help your gods if you must do anything." We said: "O Fire! Be you coolness and safety

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48: Muqaddamah Tafsīr Qurān, Sir Syed Aḥmed Khan v1, p17.

for Ibrahim." And they intended a guile against him, but We made them the worse losers. (Al-Anbiya, 21: 68-70)

قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُنْيَانًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ○ فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ○

They said, "Build for him a building, then cast him into Hell-fire." "So they sought a plan against him, but We made them low". (As-Ṣaffat, 37:97-98)

The clear and explicit words of the Quran were interpolated only to accommodate Sayyidina Ibrahim's ﷺ safe emergence from the fire to the prevalent "Natural Sense" of the West. Hence for the sake of this "Natural Sense", Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his henchmen not only violated all principles of Exegesis of the Quran and gave imaginary meanings to their words but also damaged the fundamental belief of the bodily resurrection of man, declared the realities of Devils, Jinns and Angels as superstition and rejected all the miracles of Prophets عليهم السلام. For this purpose, they turned the Quran into a collection of poetic allegories and parables. On reading their interpretations it seems that instead of narrating the incident in the lives of the Prophets عليهم السلام in its simple style, the Quran has presented them in allegoric puzzles which were disclosed to the devotees of the West for the first time after thirteen hundred years. To clothe the explicit words of the Quran with meanings that suit them seems to be a sport for them. Countless examples of this are found in their exegesis and the purpose of their effort and struggle in this direction in the words of Sir Syed Ahamd Khan is as follows.

"When miracles are considered to be superhuman or 'supernatural' we deny them and consider their

> occurence as impossible. It is like to betray an oral committment and openly declare that there is no proof of the occur-ence of such an incident which is supernatural and which is called a Miracle. Then, even if we do accept them as within the powers of God, it will serve no purpose.[49]

Contrary to this, the view of the scholars of Islam is that the occurence of Miracles is not unreasonable. They are, of course, uncommon and not regular happenings. When Allah wishes to expose the Truth of any of His Messengers before the common and illiterate men He makes such amazing and uncommon things happen at their hands that every one realises that the Messenger is truly from Allah. But, because the legal tender in the west is the coin of "Natural Sense", Sir Syed felt shy of admitting it as did his henchmen.

It was about that time that the authority of Allah was manifesting itself. Earlier theories were being proved wrong in the light of new researches and Einstein had laid the foundation of his Theory of Relativity which had turned the tables on the previous scientific theories. The drums of Atomic science were beaten loud and clear on the basis of this theory in the twentieth century and the Laws of Gravity and Cause and Effect were rejected which in turn put an end to the discussion on the difference between Natural and Supernatural. A great and widely acclaimed scientist of the present time, Sir Arthur Eddington writes:

> Scientific researches do not indicate an intrinsic constituent and inseparable quality or substance and nature of things.[50]

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49: Tafsīr ul Qurāni Sir Syed Aḥmed Khan v1, p10.

50: Eddington: The Nature of Physical world. p303. Adopted from Mazhab and Science by Mawlana 'Abdul Bārī Nadwi p86. Lahore 1976.

In this way an important result of elimination of Law of Motivity in the extrinsic world is that there is no more an apparent distinction between natural and supernatural.

How this great revolution occurred in the scientific rules? The answer is provided in the writings of a renowned scientist of modern times Sir James Jeans:

> The great seventeenth century achievement of Galileo and Newton was recognised that change, alteration or creation of every subsequent thing is the inevitable result of its past state so much so that the history of the entire expanse of nature, upto its end point is the essential and inevitable result of its beginning as it was on the first day.
>
> The essential consequence of this conception was the movement which understood the entire material world as a machine. This state of affairs continued till the end of the nineteenth century, and the sole objective of natural science came to convert and transform the universe into mechanics.
>
> It was in the last months of the nineteenth century that Max Plank of Berlin laid the foundation of Quantum Theory which developed into a universal principle of modern physics, and later on initiated a new era replacing The Mechanical era of Science.
>
> Initially, the theory of Plank did not reveal that in the Universe of Nature the process of continuity exists. But in 1917 Einstein asserted that Plank's theory in fact bears great revolutionary consequences and in the words of James Jeans: This theory will replace the law of Cause and Effect which was considered thus far as a Universal guiding principle. It was a determined and unshaken theory of science until now that Nature cannot take a single step out of the laws of

> cause and effect. After the cause 'A', the effect of 'B' should inevitably follow. But now the discoveries in science suggest that although there are several possible effects of 'A' in the form of 'B', 'C' or 'D', yet it is also true that the possibility of 'B' following 'A' is greater than of 'C' or 'D' appearing after 'A'.

James Jeans theorarised that except for this probability or strong assumption, occurence of any so-called effect after a so-called cause can neither be established with certainty nor be predicted:

> Rather This is a matter which lies on the knees of gods whatever gods there may be.[51]

In short, the science that devolped in the light of atomic resarches completely replaced the older notions that attributes can never be separated from the things of this universe, for instance the quality or nature of fire to burn other things. To day, science states that while fire does burn things and there is a strong probability that it will heat and burn, yet if ever it happens otherwise it would neither be against intellect nor the scientific rules, Hence, the scientists of today can at the most plead ignorance about miracles but cannot deny them as impossible in principle. This is perhaps why western people are turning towards things which they used to call Superstition by considering them Supernatural. The trend has gone to the extent that regular faculties for learning *magic* are being established in some universities of the West.

It has always been with the modernists that they promptly conform their opinion in line with the general thinking of the times, and build thereof a whole structure of

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51: "Mysterious Universe" by James Jeans pp27 to32 adopted from 'Mazhab and Science by Mawlana 'Abul Bāri Nadwi pp83-85.'

ideas and thoughts without investigating the matter thoroughly. The same has happened in connection with the Miracles that at a time when Sir Syyed Aḥmad Khan and his henchmen were declaring them as impossible although the general western attitude was to reject them, yet all scholars of science and philosophy had not toed in with Hume and Huxley in rejecting them. There were a large number of renowned scientists who believed in the Miracles, notably Newton, Freud, Simpson, Kelon and Lister. The famous German scientist Lotze has written several articles in support of Miracles and proved that miracles are in no way against common sense or science.[52]

The extracts of scientists quoted in the preceding lines have not been presented in support of the truthfulness of the Qurān because the Truth of Qurān is independent of such support. It was True when the scientists were making fun of the supernatural events and it is True even today when the scientists themselves admit the possibility of supernaturals. If the scientific concepts change again tomorrow, its Truth will remain unaltered. We have presented these quotations only to emphasize how weak and undurable was the foundation of those who had tried to fashion the exegesis of the Qurān in line with prevailing concepts. They had tried to measure in the temporary scale a discourse the knowledge of which encompasses all fields of past and future and before which every human effort is no more than a child's play.

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52: Encylopaedia Britannica pp587, 588, 1950, Article on Miracles The writer Alfred E Garvie has discussed exhaustively the need and possibility of miracles. He has asserted that miracles in no way defy intellect or science. The following books on this subject are worth reading: (1) Siratun Nabi v3p117 etc. 'Abdul Bārī Nadwī. (2) Mauqaful 'Aql wal'Ilm wal'Ālam, Shaikh Mustafa Ṣabri Bek. (3) Islam aur Mu'jizāt, Mawlana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni رحمة الله عليه.

Hence, instead of subjecting the Qurān to our own concepts, we must seek true guidance from it. It should be read as it was read by the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions رضی اللہ تعالی عنہم rather than through the spectacles of current concepts. Instead of being overawed by the prevalent thoughts, we must use those principles in interpreting the Quran on natural and reasonable principles of exegesis. We must present to the world with complete Faith and self confidence whatever is established conclusively instead of being shy and hesitant. The prevailing concepts may be altogether against it, yet the Qurān is Ture and if prosperity is the fate of humanity it will ultimately reach this Truth even after a thousand stumbling steps.

## AGAINST REASON OR OBSERVATION

In this connection, a mental confusion may arise if we follow the established principles and continue to attribute to the Qurān is against clear observation. If we insist on the existing interpretation of the Qurān, it would amount to attributing to Allah that which have been disproved by absolute and unfailing observation.

It should be understood that the exegesis on originating from the Prophet ﷺ or consensus of the Companions has never been proved to be against intellect or sound observation. Scientific research and discoveries have gone through hundreds of changes over the last fourteen centuries but no authentically proved exegesis of the Qurān ever went against observation. Since Qurān is word of Allah and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was sent to interpret it through his words and deeds, every interpretation given by him is in accordance with the guidance of Allah, and hence it can never go against sound reason and clear observation.

However, there are two ways of committing an error in this matter.

1: Those people who are impressed easily by prevailing concepts make haste in declaring a thing as 'Against reason'. This is an established fact that every thing that is astonishing cannot be against reason, nor can every such thing be called impossible the causes of which have not been understood. Such a thing may be called improbable, extraordinary or astonishing, but to call it impossible is itself unreasonable. It is beyond comprehension of a man who is unfamiliar with science or technology, how a wireless set carries the voice of a person thousands of miles away. A villager may refuse to accept this fact if he is told of it. But this does not make hearing that sound against reason or impossible. Some commentators do not keep this in view when writing an exegesis of the Qur'an, and term every such thing against reason or impossible as may just be astonishing or at the most against habit or improbable, while confirmation of such things in the Quran should not be surprising. We have explained in the beginning of this book that *Waḥy* (Divine Revelation) towards the Prophets begins at the point where intellectual power fails. The real purpose of *Waḥy* and Prophethood is to tell man that which he could not fathom merely by his intellect. Hence, without the agency of *Waḥy* and Prophethood, human reasoning and intellect could never have perceived the realities of Resurrection and the Hereafter, accountability and reckoning, Paradise and Hell, Angels and so on. If on the other hand, these things could have been known by intellect alone there was no need to send Prophets عليهم السلام and divine revelations and scriptures to them. Hence, if

we believe in *Waḥy* and Prophethood, we shall also have to believe that through them we would know many such things as could not be known through intellect and reason alone.

When it is agreed that confirmation of such facts in the Qurān and *Ḥadith* is essential in relevance to their subject, we cannot reject an established interpretation merely because it is astonishing unless it is factually against reason and impossible. But no such thing has yet been traced in the established interpretations of the Qurān as may be impossible or against reason, nor would it happen until the Last Day. Further details in this connection will be discussed in the next chapter on "Principles of Exegesis."

2: The other error sometimes made is that although an existing interpretation of the Qur'ān is not certain either in the context of the Qurān or from an authentic saying of the Prophet ﷺ or from a consensus of the *Ummah* yet such an exegesis becomes so popular among the people that they regard it as certain and final interpretation. When such an interpretation is later proved wrong through sound reasoning or observation some ignorant people continue to insist on them, and some others suppose that likewise, the Qurān itself or its established interpratation may also be wrong. Hence, on such occasions we must see to what degree such an interpretation belongs and we must not consider it as final only on the basis of its general popularity.

The subject has been further discussed in detail under the "Principles of Exegesis" as to what should be the correct way to be adopted when it is an apparent contradiction between the reasoned and recorded arguments?

## FOURTH CAUSE:

## MISUNDERSTANDIG THE QURĀNIC SUBJECT

The fourth wrong committed in the exegesis of the Qurān is that the subject of the Qurān is not correctly understood. People try to find such subjects in it as are outside its narrations. For instance, some people tax their brain to prove all scientific and physical realities and laws from the Qurān. They think that Qurān will be defective if these scientific realities could not be proved from it. So they sit down sincerely to prove scientific facts from the Qurān and to this end do not hesitate to attribute wrong meanings to the words of the Qurān. The fact is that science is not the real subject of the Qurān. Mention of realities of this universe, whenever found in the Qurān, has come up as a secondary subject. Thus, if we find a scientific fact mentioned in the Qurān, we must believe in it. But, to try to deduce a scientific fact or rule from it is akin to finding details of law in books of medicine.

The Qurān is not vague or ambiguous on its purpose but it has clarified in many verses the purpose of its revelation. For instance, the following verses need attention in this context,

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَّكِتَابٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝ يَهْدِيْ بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ
اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّوْرِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيْهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ۝

Indeed there has come to you from Allah a Light and Book manifest, whereby Allah guides those who follow His good pleasure into the ways of peace, and brings them out from the depths of darkness

into light by His decree, and guides them to the straight way. (Al-Mā'idah, 5:15-16)

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِنَ
الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ

O People of the Book! Now there has come to you Our Messenger, making things clear to you, after an interval (of cessation) of the Messengers lest you should say "There has not come to us any bearer of glad tidings, nor any warner." Indeed there has come to you now a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. (Al-Mā'idah, 5:19)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ
الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً
وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ
فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا
فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ٥

And We have revealed to you (O Prophet) the Book with the truth, confirming that which was before it of the Book, and a guardian thereof. So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed and follow not their caprices by forsaking the truth that has come to you. To every (people) We have appointed a law and a way (of ritual). And if Allah had willed, He would have surely made you all a single community; but (He willed

otherwise) that He might try you in what He gave you. So outstrip one another in virtuous deeds. To Allah is the return of all of you, so He will then inform you of that wherein you used to differ. (Al-Mā'idah, 5:48)

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِيْنَ سَبِيْلُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ○

And thus do We explain the revelations in detail, that the way of the sinners may be shown up clearly.

(Al-An'ām, 6:55)

كِتٰبٌ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِيْ صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنْذِرَ بِهٖ
وَذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ○

This is a Book revealed to you (O Prophet) let there be no impediment in your heart therefrom – that you may warn thereby (the disbelievers), and this is an admonition to the Believers. (Al-A'rāf, 7:1)

اَوَعَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ جَآءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْكُمْ
لِيُنْذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوْا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ○

Do you wonder that admonition should come to you from your Lord through a man from among you, that he may warn you, and that you may fear (Allah) and that you may be shown mercy? (Al-A'raf, 7:63)

تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ○ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ○
الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ
يُوْقِنُوْنَ ○

These are verses (āyāt) of the Wise Book. A guidance

and a mercy for the good-doers, who establish the Ṣalah and pay the Zakāh, and of the Hereafter they are convinced. (Luqmān, 31:1-4)

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ
افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ○

The revelation of the Book, therein is no doubt, is from the Lord of the worlds, or do they say, "He has forged it?" Nay, it is the Truth from your Lord (O Prophet) that you may warn a people to whom no warner came before you, that they may be guided. (As-Sajdah, 32:1-3)

تَنْزِيلَ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَا أُنْذِرَ آبَاؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ
غَافِلُونَ ○

(This Qurān) is a revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful, that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless. (Yā-sīn, 36:5-6)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ○

Surely We have revealed to you (O Prophet) the Book with truth, so worship Allah, keeping your faith sincerely to Him. (Az-Zumar, 39:2)

وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ
حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ
وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ ○

And thus We have revealed tq you an Arabic Qurān that

you may warn the mother-town, and those around it, and that you may warn of the Day of Gathering, whereof there is no doubt, (when) a party will be in the Garden, and a party in the blazing Fire. (Ash-Shūra, 42:7)

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ○ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُغْنُوا عَنكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَإِنَّ
الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ○ هَٰذَا
بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ○

Then We established you (O Prophet) on a Shariah (Open way) of (Our) Command; so follow it, and follow not the caprices of those who know not. Surely they cannot avail you of anything against Allah, and surely the evildoers are friends of one another; and Allah is the Friend of the God-fearing. This (Qurān) is an enlightenment for mankind, and a guidance and a mercy for people who are convinced. (Al-Jāthiyah, 45:18-20)

اَللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ
جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ
اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ ○

Allah has (now) sent down the most excellent discourse, a Book alike throughout, oft-repeating (its teachings,) whereat shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts soften to Allah's remembrance. This is Allah's guidance He guides with it whomsoever He will. And he whom Allah sends astray,

there is no guide for him. (Az-Zumar, 39:23)

These are just a few examples, and if one ponders over them it will be clear that the real purpose of the Qurān is to exhort man to prepare for the Hereafter, and to teach him to pass this life in accordance with the will of Allah. Then whatever it narrates of the historical facts or references of the Universe and galaxies are all meant to support and affirm the same basic theme. Hence, if we do not find a popular scientific fact in it, it should neither surprise us nor is anything wrong in it because that is not the theme of the Qurān. Similarly, if there be no mention of a past or future event, there should be no objection because it is not a book of history. However the Qurān describes here and there some incidents by way of lesson and admonition. This answers the objection of those non-Muslims who ask why the Qurān does not refer to the arts and sciences through which material advancement has been attained by the Western countries? It also removes the misunderstanding of those who try to somehow prove scientific theories or laws from the Qurān to cope with these objections. Such an attempt is like looking into a Law Book for a formula to make an atom bomb and an attempt by some other people to extract the theory of atom by distorting the legal phraseology of the book. Obviously, these other people are foolish if they attempt to discover the theory in a Law book. Similarly, if some one objects to the absence of scientific and engineering theories, it is foolish to distort the words of the Qurān to somehow extract those theories or laws from it. The correct answer to the objection is that the Qurān is neither a book of science or engineering nor material advancement is its theme, because a man can find that out through his intellect, wisdom, experiments and observations. That is why Allah has left it to man to investigate about these things. The Qurān has as its theme

only what cannot be conceived through intellect and reasoning alone, but Divine guidance in the form of *Waḥy* is essential for them. Thus, man has attained heights in the field of Science and Technology through his intellect, thinking, experiments and observations. But he could not progress in Faith and Belief, purity of heart and soul, goodness of character and deeds, devotion in worship and preparedness for the Hereafter. These things are not possible without the *Waḥy* from Allah and are therefore, subjects of the Qurān. Man cannot attain them in spite of his excellences of intellect and thinking, nor can they be attained unless guidance from the Qurān is sought with sincerity.

We do not mean to say it is wrong to deduce a scientific fact from the Qurān. We also admit that there is a mention of scientific realities in the Qurān as a passing reference, hence, if we find any explicit scientific fact in the Qurān, there is nothing wrong in narrating it. But one must avoid the following errors in this connection:

1: Any scientific reality mentioned in the Qurān is only in passing. Its real object is to reflect on the supreme authority of Allah and to strengthen the Faith. Hence, it is totally wrong to consider the Qurān as a source of information on science.

2: Where no information of a scientific subject is found it would be wrong to distort the words of the Qurān to accommodate scientific facts into it. This is well understood by means of the following example:

When the scientists said that the Earth was stationary and other planets were revolving round it, some people tried to prove this theory from the Qurān, and cited the following verse:

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا

Who made this earth a fixed abode. (An-Naml, 27:61)

Those people pleaded that the word (fixed abode) denoted that the Earth was stationary. However, Qurān only recalls the blessing of Allah that man lives on this earth restfully rather than be unstable on it, and has no trouble in sitting or lying down or moving about on it. Obviously, this blessing of Allah has nothing to do with the movement or not of the Earth. But, in fact, the blessing is bestowed on man irrespective of whether the earth is stationary or moving. Hence trying to prove from this verse that the Earth is stationary is uncalled for and an unnecessary introduction of new meaning into it.

Later on, when science advanced the theory of Rotation of Earth as opposed to its being stationary, some people again occupied themselves in finding proof for that in the Qurān, and the following verse was presented as an argument:

وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

> And you shall see the mountains — you think them firmly fixed — passing away as the passing away of the clouds.... (An-Naml, 27:88)

These people translated the word (تمر) as referring to earth (feminine noun in Arabic) while it refers to mountains (and is the female singular of the plural noun mountains).

On this basis they advocated that this verse described the movement of the Earth because the movement of mountains in fact means the movement of Earth. The context of the verse shows clearly that it pertains to the happenings of the Last Day. The verse simply means that the seemingly unmoving mountains shall (on the Last Day)

be floating in the atmosphere like the clouds.

The fact is that the Qurān is silent on the subject of rotation of Earth and there is no mention of it in the entire Qurān, because this is not part of its theme. We cannot prove or disprove movement of the earth from the Qurān. Hence, whichever view is adopted in the light of scientific arguments, the Qurān does not interfere; it poses no danger to Faith and Religion either way.

It should be noted here that often sincere attempts are made to show that the Qurān narrates scientific facts and the intention generally is to convince the non-Muslims that the discoveries which they had made after hundreds of years have already been foretold in the Qurān. But if this is done by violating the principle of exegesis, it is not being friendly to the Qurān. When they were trying to prove through the Qurān that Earth is stationary they considered it a great service to the Qurān, but if it was universally accepted that the Qurān speaks of a stationary Earth, what effect this would have had when science changed its views and said the earth rotates? Hence, only those things about science can be attributed to the Qurān which are explicitly proved in it; but those not clearly mentioned in the Qurān cannot be attributed to it. It was wrong to do so in the past, and it is wrong even today.[53]

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53: See also al Intibāhāt al-Mufīdah and Hallul Intibāhāt, fourth intibah, v2, pp 27-46, by Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thānvī printed at Delhi.

**CHAPTER-3**

# SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF EXEGESIS

As has been stated already, exegesis of the Qurān and deduction of laws and commands from it form part of a very vast subject. In order to fully understand, its principles a knowledge of Arabic language and literature, its grammar and composition, *Ḥadith* and Jurisprudence are essential. All these principles cannot be discussed in this book. The science of Principles of Jurisprudence comprises mostly the principles of deducing the Laws and Commands from the Qurān. It is essential for anybody wishing to acquire a detailed knowledge of this science, to learn it from the experts in this field. In these pages, however we wish to mention some of the broad principles of the exegesis of the Qurān that can be understood without a thorough proficiency in the science of principles of jurisprudence. These are the principles which if ignored, cause misunderstandings and sometimes a divergence into the wrong. These are not all the principles of exegesis of the Qurān but are some selected discussions on this subject according to the need of the present times.

## 1: THE NOBLE QURĀN AND ALLEGORIC MEANINGS

Sometimes a word is used not in its literal sense but in allegorical sense. For example, the real meaning of the word "lion" is "a wild carnivorous animal" but sometimes it is also used in the meaning of "a brave man". For instance, "Richard, the lion-hearted" does not mean that Richard had the heart of lion in his body, but that Richard was a brave person. Similarly, many other words are used in a certain context where the literal meanings do not apply but a proverbial reference is made. This style is employed in the Qurān too. This does not mean however, that everyone is at liberty to give to a Qurānic word a literal meaning or an allegorical meaning as he chooses. The scholars of Islam have framed an appropriate rule on which there is a general consensus. We must understand the rule here. The rule is that in the first place the literal meaning of a word of the Qurān would apply, and the proverbial or allegoric meaning would be adopted only when the literal meaning cannot be adopted due to a sound reason. Where there is no such reason, the proverbial meaning shall not apply. Following are the situations which serve as sound reasons for this purpose.

1: Reason or unfailing observation may show that the literal meaning does not fit. A detailed discussion will follow when the next principle on Reason and the Qurān is discussed.
2: The literal meanings of a sentence may have become obsolete from proverbial or allegoric point of view. For instance, it has been said about the unbelievers

فَقَلِيْلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○

So little is that they believe. (Al-Baqarah, 2:88)

The literal meaning of the word قليل is small, little or

not big, but in this sentence in a proverbial use it does not mean "they believe but only a little", but it means "they do not believe at all" and in this way the word قليل is proverbially used in the negative sense. The English word 'few' or 'little' has the same implication.

3: The style of the Qurānic phrase may not allow for the literal meaning to be read. For instance, the Qurān says,

فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ

So let him who wills believe, and let him who will, disbelieve. (Al-Khaf, 18:29)

The exact literal meanings of these words would be that (God forbid) this is a permission from Allah to man to believe or disbelieve as he chooses. But further on it is said

إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا

Surely we have prepared for the evildoers a fire...
(Al-Kahf, 18:29)

These words make it obvious that the verse does not permit man to choose belief or disbelief at his will, but that after having known the consequences of either path, man is at liberty to remain in the state of disbelief or adopt the way of belief. In the former instance he would face the torment of Hell and in the later case he will receive the pleasure of Allah.[54]

Except for the above situations it will not be correct to interpret any word in its proverbial sense in preference to its literal sense. This is an accepted principle and it is

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54: In order to avoid a detailed discourse in the meanings, we have used simple words to outline the principle, A detailed discourse may be seen in the Books of fiqh notably Bayḍāwīs "Uṣūl aur us Ki sharah and 'Abdul 'Azīz Al-Najāri's." Kashf al-Asrār.

unquestionable that it is reasonable too. If a free hand is allowed to choose proverbial sense in the words of Allah, no verse of the Quran will escape interpolation in its meanings, and every body would impose his self-conceived ideas on the Quran on the plea that proverbial meanings of the words or phrases apply.

The matter is not limited only to literal and proverbial meanings. Sometimes there may be more than one literal meaning of a word or a sentence. In such a situation the rule is that the meanings which are nearest, more explicit and readily understood shall be adopted. Distant or hidden meanings shall not be adopted unless any of the above mentioned stituation exists in rejecting the nearest meanings, or these other meanings are known to have been applied by the Prophet ﷺ.

Thus 'Allamah Badruddin Zarkashi رحمة الله عليه has said:

احدهما ان يكون احدهما اظهر من الأخر، فيجب الحمل على الظاهر الا ان يقوم دليل على ان المراد هو الخفى دون الجلى فيحمل عليه ۔

(The likelihood of more than one meaning of the text of the Quran is) first, when one meaning is more clear than the other so only such clear meanings will be applied except there be a reason to prefer the rare meaning to the apparent. In the latter case, the rare meaning will be chosen.[55]

This principle is so self-evident and reasonable that one cannot ignore it even in the common human discourses, to say nothing of the words of Allah. If this is ignored, it will not be possible to understand the other person's speech in its

55: Al-Burhan fi 'Uloom ul Quran v2, p167.

true perspective. Suppose a man reaches the Railway station and asks his servant "Go and buy the ticket." If now this servant goes and brings the Postage stamp instead of a Railway Ticket, he would be called a stupid person although both possibilities existed in the word "Ticket".[56] But it was the stupidity of the servant that instead of adopting the nearest and more apparent meanings he adopted the distant and inevident meanings. Similarly, if the ruler of a town orders an engineer to have a canal dug up at a particular place so that the surrounding area may be fertile, but the engineer builds a school claiming that the ruler meant so and in support of his view presents references from great writers and poets that they have used the word "canal" (نہر) allegorically in the meaning of "education institution", what would people say of such an engineer? He will be considered an insane person because his interpretation can only be correct if there exists a valid argument against the use of its literal meaning which does not exist here.

Some people have fallen a prey to grave aberrances in the exegesis of Qurān ignoring this principle. In olden times a group of renegades existed by the name of Qarāmiṭah or Bāṭiniyyah. They had built the entire structure of their religion in that they gave strange and rather funny meanings to every word of the Qurān. Thus they claimed that in the Qurān 'Ṣalāh' means 'submission to the leader' (Bāṭinī leader), 'Ḥajj' means 'visit to their leader and service to him', Ṣaum (Fasting) means 'To abstain from disclosing the secrets of their leader' 'Fornication' means 'disclosing a secrect of the *Bāṭinī* People'[57] The 'Staff of Mūsa' means 'Victory of Mūsa' and

56: Actually this example is given in Urdu and the word ticket is used in Urdu for postage stamp also.

57: Al-Farq baynel firuq, Abdul Qāhir al-Baghdadi al-Asfaraine, p296. Cairo.

the 'Shade of clouds' means 'Establishing their Rule.'[58]

In the present time also there have been several authors who have defied this rule and dangerously stumbled in the path of exegesis. For instance, on the basis of a cursory knowledge of western philosdophy in the beginning of nineteenth century some Modernists rejected all such things out of Islamic beliefs that were described by the Westerners as "Superstitions." To achieve that they made such interpolations in the Qurān that one shudders at the thought. In this way they have labelled about half the Qurānic verses as allegorical, metaphors and parables. For instance, the Qurān has described, at several places, the creation of Sayyidina Ādam ﷺ, the prostration of angels before him, and the transgression of Iblīs. But since at that time Darwin's theory of Evolution was becoming very popular in the West, and some incomplete information about it were being received in India also, those Modernists claimed that the story of Sayyidina Ādam ﷺ angels, and Iblīs described in the Qurān is simply a parable, otherwise they have never really existed. Hence Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan has written;

> "By the word Ādam is not meant the particular being whom the people and the Mullahs of the mosque call Father Ādam, but by it is meant the mankind."[59]

He further writes:

> Four parties are named in this incident, Firstly Gods[60] secondly the Angels (that is, angelic traits), thirdly Iblis or Satān (that is, beastlly traits), fourthly Ādam (that is, mankind which is a

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58: Al-Milal wan Naḥl, Shahristāni, v1, p334.

59: Tafsīr-ul-Qurān by Sir Sayyed Aḥmed Khan v1, p48.

60: It is consoling that he has not given an allegorical meaning to God as he has done to the other three names (in brackets).

composite of all these traits and includes men and women both.) The purpose of the story is to describe human nature by means of human faculty of expression."

The question arose that the Quran has stated about the angels that they remain busy in praising and glorifying Allah. How is it so? In reply Sir Sayyed writes.

"Whatever traits describe the task to keep on doing the same task, and this is their praise and glorification. The faculties of sleep, speech, burning, flowing, freezing cannot do anything other than inducing sleep, speech, burning, flowing and freezing respectively."

The question then arose what was meant by Ādam's abode in Paradise, eating from the forbidden tree, and his descent from there to the earth? Note the jugglery of "Allegory and Parable" in reply to this question:

"Right from the beginning we do not consider this story of Ādam and Iblīs as a real story, but just an expression of human nature in its own language. Hence, the stay of man in Paradise is an expression of a state of his nature when he was not bound to any Do's and Don'ts.... And his going near the Forbidden Tree and eating its fruit denotes the state of his nature when he became bound from that boundless state. The use of the word Descent is not specific for change of place alone."[61]

The question still arose that Iblis refused to go in prostration because he was created out of fire and Ādam out of dust, what could it mean?

"Describing the beastly traits as creation from fire is exactly an expression of their nature of

61: Tafsīr ul-Qurān, Sir Sayyed Aḥmad Khan.v1, p51.

originating from internal and external heat."

In the words of Sir Sayyed the whole incident is summarized as under:

> "This Trait of mankind has been described by God in the metaphor of Garden, hence the entire nature has been described in the same metaphor of Garden. 'Tree' means reaching the age of maturity, eating the fruit is cognition of good and bad, covering the body with tree leaves is man's concealing his evils. But mankind was not allowed to reach the fruit from the Tree of Paradise, which proved that his is a mortal existence and not an eternal existence."[62]

We do not feel the necessity of any scholastic review on these excerpts.[63]

Just go through the story of Ādam and Iblīs in the Qurān and try to collaborate it with these interpolations and it will become quite clear what absurdities have been attributed to the Qurān just by ignoring the established principles about discriminating the real from the allegoric.

Similarly, the Qurān is full of descriptions about the blessings of Paradise. The picturesque gardens, green and colourful atmosphere, flowing rivers, elegant houses, beautiful and pure companions, delicious foods and fruits

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62: Tafsīr ul-Qurān, Sir Sayyed Aḥmad Khan, v1, p159.

63: However, it has just reminded us of a famous leader of Baṭiniyyh, named Ubaidullah bin Al-Hasan Al-Qīrwāni who had written to one of his followers, "I make the bequest that you cast doubts and suspicions in the minds of people about the Qurān, Torāh, Zabūr and Injīl, invite them towards rescission of all religious laws, and erase the concept of Hereafter, Resurrection and Doomsday, Angels in the sky and Jinns on the earth. I further will that you invite people to the belief that there had been many a mankind that existed even before Ādam, because this will help you to prove this world as immortal."

have been mentioned in countless verses. But according to Sir Sayyed Aḥmad Khan all this is allegoric and metaphoric. The main purpose is to describe a 'high grade of bliss and comfort'. These things have been described only to lure the illiterate people to dedicate themselves to worship. He writes:

> "A trained mind thinks that the promises and warnings, Hell and Paradise do not exactly mean the self-same objects, but the extreme degree of happiness and comfort, in similitude, compatible to human understanding. This creates an ecstatic sense of blessings of Paradise and an urge to obey the Commands and abstain from the forbidden. The stupid Mullāhs or lustful devotees think that they would get innumerable beautiful women (Ḥūrs), drink wine, eat fruit, take bath in the rivers of milk and honey, and shall have all the luxuries they would wish. And due to these stupid and frivolous thoughts they keep himself busy day and night in obeying the commands and abstaining from the forbidden."[64]

The truth is that if the principle about the Obvious and Allegoric, is set aside, there is not the worst of superstition and the meansest of action that might not be attributed to the Qurān. The Bāṭiniyyah had used the same tool to prove Zoroasteric belief from the Qurān, and even today there are many Christian priests who are using the distant and irrelevant interpretations of Qurānic verse to prove that it supports Christian faith. Hence, it is ironic that about half the Qurān becomes comprised of allegories and metaphors. If the growth of trees is termed as 'angels', the rivers stand for power of 'movement', fire is an expression for power of heat,

64: Tafsīr ul-Qurān. Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan v1. p35.

Ādam means 'mankind', Iblīs is the word to denote 'evil forces', then Hell could mean worldly afflictions, Paradise would stand for worldly comforts and even for "God" it may be said that it is not the name of a constant existant Being but it represents the reality of this universe, that is, matter or energy, and the conception of God given by the Qurān has been described by Muḥammad ﷺ to frighten the Beduins of Arabia and call them towards righteous deeds. In this way the weapon of 'Allegory and Metaphor' totally eradicates belief and religion, and even a belief in the existence of God does not remain necessary to practise the teachings of the Qurān. This is not our hypothesis but the Bāṭiniyyahs had actually made such claims through unchecked freedom in the use of allegories and metaphors.

'Allāmah 'Abdul Qāhir Baghdadi رحمة الله عليه writes:'

> "The famous leader of Bāṭiniyyah sect, 'Ubaidullah bin Al-Ḥasan Qirwānī has written in his book that 'reward and punishment of Hereafter are absurdities. By 'Paradise' is in fact meant the comforts and luxuries of this world, and 'Torment' represents the religious devotees remaining trapped in the whirlwind of Ṣalah, Fasting, Ḥajj and Jehād."[65]

Hence, if one wants to benefit from the Qurān in its capacity of the Book of Guidance from Allāh, it would be extremely irrational, frivolous and risky that if there is anything in the Qurān against one's own views one may open the door of self-invented interpretations and claim that distant and allegoric meanings are to be adopted in preference to obvious and straightforward meanings. The present day authors who have used their pen for the

65: Al-Farq bayn-al-firaq p259.

exegesis of the Qurān without fulfilling the basic requirements of the science of exegesis have very often made this fundamental error in their writings. If the above mentioned principle is kept in view while reading the works of these authors, most of these errors would become easily manifest.

## 2: THE NOBLE QURĀN AND HUMAN RATIONALE

Some writers of the present era sometimes apply distant meanings to the texts of the Qurān and *Ḥadith* on the plea that their obvious meanings are against common sense and reason. Hence, they must be interpreted in a way that is not against reason. Since a great deal of errors are being made in this matter, a detailed discussion on the subject is being presented.

First of all, it should be understood that henceforth we shall call as 'Recorded arguments' those things that are proved from the Qurān and *Ḥadith* and as 'Human rationale' or 'logic' those things that we find through reason.

The main reason why misunderstandings arise in this connection is explained here. Our scholars have laid down in their books the rule that logic will be adopted if Recorded Arguments are against them. If the latter are not authentically documented they would be regarded as incorrect, and if their authenticity is unquestionable it would be said that their obvious meanings are not intended, and if another meaning can be informally adopted that will be taken as the intended meaning. If an informal explanation is not conceived it would be said that the true meanings have not been understood by us, and the reality is best known to Allah. It is this kind of Recorded Arguments that is termed as '*Mutashabihāt*' (Doutful).[66]

66: Imām Rāzi book Asās Taqdīs fi 'Ilmal kalām p72-73, Chapter 32, Mustafa al-Bābi, Egypt 1354 AH.

The above mentioned rule is well known to scholars but due to a lack of true understanding some writers have adopted the practice of declaring every such thing as against reason which goes against their self-conceived opinion while it has been fully explained by those who have framed this rule. Let us thoroughly understand this explanation. Mawlāna Ashraf Ali Thānvī رحمة الله عليه has described this rule very well in his journal *'Al-Intibā hāt-ul-Mufīdah..'* We shall first mention this rule in his own words (translated) as below:

> "There are four possible differences in the Recorded argument and Logic or Human Rationale. Firstly: Both may be certain and decisive. This does not exist nor it can exist because opposition among Truths is impossible.
> Secondly: Both may be presumptive wherein although a combination is possible through obvious meanings only, but according to the rule of the language weight of the actual words will be put on the obvious. Recorded arguments will be subjected to the obvious, and logic will not be taken as conclusive.
> Thirdly: Recorded argument may be certain and human rationale may be presumptive. In this situation undoubtedly the former will be preferred.
> Fourthly: Logic may be certain and the recorded arguments be presumptive, proof-wise or reason-wise. Here the former will be preferred and the latter will be subject to interpretation. Hence this is the only situation where reason may have precedence over narration, and thus it canot be used or claimed at every place."[67]

In order to understand this rule it should first be kept in

67: Al-Intabā-hāt ul Mufidah ma' Halli-Intibāhāt v1, p66,74. Delhi.

mind that human rationale or 'Reason' may be of three kinds:

## (1) CONCLUSIVE REASON

These are such logical arguments that are absolutely conclusive and accepted by all people without the least demur. It is absolutely certain that there cannot be anything against them. For instance, two and two make four, is a conclusive logical argument which can never be refuted. Two and two can never be three or five just as it is impossible that a man may be present at a place and absent too at the same time.

## (2) PRESUMPTIVE REASON

These are such logical statements that may not be absolutely certain but in view of reason and experience their truth may be highly probable. All intellectuals do not always come together to accept the truth of these statements, but differences in viewpoints have arisen in these matters due to different times and regions. For instance, Newton's Theory of Gravity, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Darwin's Theory of Evolution, etc. Obviously, none of these were absolutely conclusive but these philosophers had formed an opinion on the basis of their intellect and experience which they corsidered to be more correct in view of the state of knowledge and environment of that period. But this view cannot be taken as absolutely correct. That is why many other philosophers differed from it. Some particular viewpoint captured their minds at a certain period of time but at another time the same view was rejected.

## (3) CONJECTURAL HUMAN RATIONALE

These are those arguments that are based on conjecture or imagination rather than certainty or probability. For

instance, until recently scientists thought that there was life on Mars. This was not based on any conclusive or presumptive reasons but on imaginary speculations.

Similarly, Recorded Arguments may also be divided into three kinds.

## (1) CONCLUSIVE RECORDED ARGUMENTS

These are the arguments which are absolutely conclusive. Subjectwise their words are clear and explicit and their proof is also absolutely reliable. For instance, the Qurānic injunction لا تقربوا الزنا (Do not go even near adultery). This is a certain and conclusive argument that adultery is forbidden in Islam, because Muslims do not doubt that the Qurān is the word of Allah, and this verse conclusively proves that the Qurān prohibits adultery. Similarly, the matters that are proved from uninterrupted Prophetic Narrations[68] or absolute consensus are of the same kind.

## (2) PRESUMPTIVE RECORDED ARGUMENTS

These are arguments that are not so conclusive as the first kind but whatever is deduced from them is correct in all probabilities. For instance, such traditions as are not uninterrupted but conform to the Principles of *Ḥadith*. Although it is incumbent to follow them in practice and

68: Un-interrupted or 'Mutawātir' traditions are those sayings of the Prophet ﷺ which had been reported by so many people at every period of time that it would be impossible to consider them all as liars. With regard to transmission such traditions are regarded as certain and conclusive. But the traditions whose reporters had been reduced to one, two or three at a certain period i.e. Akhbar-e-Āhad' are regarded as Presumptive, that is, their proof is not so certain as that of uninterrupted reports. However, if they fulfil the conditions of Principles of *Ḥadith* most probably they are correct, hence there is a consensus of the entire *Ummah* that it is obligatory to adopt them.

they should not be opposed, yet they are placed in the second grade because their transmission is not as certain and conclusive as the Qurān and uninterrupted traditions. Hence, if such a tradition goes against the Qurān and uninterrupted traditions, it would be interpreted in conformity with the Qurān or uninterrupted traditions. If such interpretation is not possible, it would be forsaken.

## (3) CONJECTURAL RECORDED ARGUMENTS

These are such recorded arguments whose correctness is not even probable but are based on imagination and speculation, for instance those traditions that do not conform to the principles of *Ḥadith*.

Of the above six kinds, two (conjectural rational and conjectural recorded arguments) are not reliable at all. Hence, we need not discuss them. Keeping the other four in view four possibilities of differences may occur in the logical and Recorded arguments.

i) The first Possibility is that both (Recorded and Logical arguments) may be conclusive. This is only a hypothesis. Practically it has never happened so far. It is possible that a conclusive recorded argument may contradict a conclusive human rationale. If at all it appears to be so, then the recorded argument would be conclusive only as far as its transmission and precedent. But the argument would not be conclusive. And if the argument is conclusive the transmission and precedent would not be conclusive. It has never happened and shall never happen that a recorded argument be conclusive in all senses and yet be against conclusive logical argument; i.e. human rationale.

ii) The second possibility is that the recorded argument be presumptive and human rationale be conclusive and the two may clash with each other. This is the

situation about which scholars and intellectuals have said that reliance will be placed on Logical argument (or human rationale) and reason, and the recorded argument will be interpreted in a manner that it will be in conformity with the conclusive logical argument. For instance, the Qurān says:

اَلرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى

*ar-Rahman* (Allah) straightened on the Throne.

This is a Qurānic verse, hence it is conclusive but the translation is not conclusive because the word استوىٰ can have several meanings in idiomatic Arabic, and the meaning adopted here is not conclusive. Hence, this is an example of that recorded argument which is presumptive on argumental basis. On the other side, the meaning that is obvious (that is, straightening on the Throne) is against logical argument because "straightening" is a quality of body, and the conclusive arguments of intellect denote that Allah is not a 'body'. In this way the presumptive Recorded Argument is contradictory to Conclusive Logical Argument. Hence the exegetists of the *Ummah* unanimously adopted the latter, and all the scholars agreed that in this verse its obvious meanings are not intended. Then, some of them called it an allegory and said that it signifies power and authority etc., and some of them said that this verse is one of those "*mutashābihāt*" (doubtful) about whom Allah has said......

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ

But none knows its interpretation except Allah.

(Āl-'Imrān, 3:7)

Similarly, in connection with the story of Zulqarnayn, the Qurān states

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ

Until, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it setting in a miry spring. (Al-Kahf, 18:86)

This is also a verse of the Quran, hence undoubtedly, the word of Allah. But the obvious meaning of this sentence creates an impression that the sun was actually setting in a muddy spring, but this is not correct in view of conclusive arguments of intellect and observation, because it is a reality that the sun and earth are separate spheres which do not meet each other at any point. Hence, this obvious meaning cannot be adopted. It would mean that the place whre Zulqarnayn reached at that time was not inhabited beyond and it was all quagmire as far as the eye could see. Hence a viewer on that spot would feel that sun was setting in that quagmire. Although this interpretation is not as obvious from the words of this phrase as the previous one but since there is room for it in those words this verse is presumptive on the first meaning, and when it is placed before the conclusive arguments of intellect and observation, they are acceptable and the explanation of the verse is unanimously adopted which is in conformity with these conclusive arguments.

The third situation may be that the Recorded argument be conclusive and the logical argument or human rationale be presumptive. In this case, obviously the Recorded argument will be preferred because here the Presumptive Argument cannot supercede conclusive argument. For instance, Darwin claimed in his Theory of Evolution that the human race did not come into existence by itself, but animals passed through a chain of evolution with the passage of time and as a result they went through many stages until the last before transformation into human shape was monkeys or apes which ultimately envolved into human beings.

Obviously, Darwin's Theory was an Imaginative view, and the arguments advanced by him (if they can be called as 'arguments') were at the most presumptive arguments. But against it the Quran makes an explicit statement:

يَاأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

**O mankind Fear your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and from him He created his mate, and from the twain He spread abroad many men and women.**

**(An-Nisa, 4:1)**

**and further stated:**

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ○ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ○ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ○

**And (recall) when your Lord said to the angels, 'Surely I am creating a mortal out of a ringing clay of mud moulded. So When I have shaped him, and breathed into him of My spirit, fall you down before him prostrating — so the angels prostrated themselves all together.**

**(Al-Hijr. 15:28-30)**

These and similar other verses explicitly prove that the origin of mankind was from a single person Sayyidna Adam ﷺ whom Allah created from mud. These arguments of Quran are conclusive. Hence, they absolutely refute the theory of Darwin, and to set aside the explicit statements of the Quran in preference to this theory (which could be only Presumptive at the most), or seek distant explanations of the Quranic verses cannot be correct.

The fourth situation may be that the Recorded Argument is presumptive and Logical Argument may also be presumptive. Here also the scholars and intellectuals are unanimous that the Recorded Arguments would be preferred, and until the reason is supported by conclusive observation, it would not be proper to read in the Qurān and *Ḥadith* anything but the apparent meaning. The reason is the same as has been described in detail under the heading "The Qurān and Allegory". Not only in the Qurān but in any discourse anywhere, the rule is that the real and not the proverbial meaning is adopted unless there is a compulsion. If a conclusive Logical Argument is against the obvious meaning the compulsion is obvious and in this situation adoption of Proverbial meaning is understandable. But if the Logical Argument is presumptive, adoption of proverbial or distant meanings do not form any compulsion, because the Presumptive Logical Arguments are never universal or eternal. One person may accept it and another may reject it. It may be commonly accepted at one time but may be called aberrance at another time. The history of philosophy and Science is full of many views of this kind. A philosopher at one time believes in a particular view and considers his presumptive arguments superior to all other arguments, yet another philosopher exactly at the same time considers an antagonistic view as correct and pleads the arguments related to it. As time passes on, it is found that the arguments of the earlier philosophers were all baseless and wrong. It is difficult to estimate how many such Presumptive Logical Arguments were subsequently rejected on the basis of Conclusive Logical Arguments or explicit observation. But in the fourteen hundred years, we will find only one or two cases of presumptive Recorded Arguments

contradicted by Conclusive Logical Arguments. Hence if the door of interpretations in the Recorded Arguments is opened on the basis of every Presumptive Argument of Intellect, the result will be nothing but to turn the Qurān and *Hadith* into plaything. Mawlana Ḥifzur-Raḥmān Siyuhārvī has written an excellent note as under.

> "In fact Islam teaches that for such scientific discussions wherein the subject has reached the stage of certainty and observation, and Qurānic Sciences and Divine revelations do not contradict them (because the Qurān never contradicts Observation and the obvious) they should be accepted without hesitation because denial of such realities would be nothing but prejudice and short-sightedness. And the subjects that have not yet reached such limit of certainty and resolution as to be called observation and self evident they should not be given allegorical meanings in the Qurān, and attempts to mould them according to the latest Researchers are not lawful. One should wait for the time till those subjects expose their realities in a manner that their denial would mean the denial of observation and self evident, because this is an undeniable fact that the scientific observations had to be given up a number of times but the Sciences of Qurān have never had to change."[69]

Hence the fundamental principle is that in case of a contradiction in the Presumptive arguments of Reason and Records, preference will be for the Recorded Presumptive Arguments, and it will be incorrect to seek uncommon explanation for the Recorded Arguments on the basis of Intellectual Presumptive Arguments. However, we must remember Presumptive Arguments by themselves are not

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69: Qasas-ul-Qurān v1, p49, the story of Ādam ﷺ.

all alike, but they lie in different grades. Accordingly some presumptive arguments are more forceful than others. For instance, it is presumptive that the earth revolves and it is also presumptive that a creation "Neanderthal"[70] existed in this earth before mankind. Obviously, the force attained by the former is not attainable by the latter. Also, take the example of a Presumptive Recorded Argument quoted in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and all other books of *Ḥadīth* and an argument that is recorded with authentic narrations and precedents but not quoted in the popular books of *Hadith*. Obviously, the former will have a greater force than the latter. Similarly, there may be different grades in the presumptive arguments.

Now, if there is an Intellectual Presumptive Argument of first grade and a Recorded Presumptive Argument of second or third grade a scholar may prefer the former to the latter and interpret the Recorded Argument in a manner that though it may sound uncommon in reflection to obvious meanings of the words yet in conformity with Logical argument. However, this interpretation should not be described in a conclusive and established manner until that Logical Argument is proved by Observation or certainties. Rather it should be said that it is cited as an explanation which is more reasonable in view of Logical Arguments.

But since it is difficult to bring these grades of Presumptive Arguments within the framework of established laws it is not for everyone to decide which presumptive argument is in what grade. Such a decision can be made only by a person having full grip on the Recorded and Logical Arguments, and a deep insight in the Sciences of the Qurān and *Hadīth*. In this matter, sometimes the opinions of scholars also differ.

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70: Encyclopaedia Britannica 1950, v14, p764, Topic 'Man'.

This will be better understood by an example. The Quran states that when Zulqarnayn constructed the wall to stop Gog and Magog, he said:

هَٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّي فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا ۝

"This (wall) is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He shall make it into powder, and the promise of my Lord is ever true.
(Al-Kahf, 18:98)

In interpreting this verse most commentators have said that by "promise of my Lord" is meant the Last Day and the phrase means that the wall will break when the Last Day is near and Gog and Magog will come out. Although the Quran has mentioned the words "promise of my Lord" and not explained it further but since this phrase has been used in the Quran at many places in the meaning of "Last Day", the commentators have adopted the same meaning here. So, this interpretation is not conclusive but presumptive.

On the other hand, geographical and historical researches indicate that the wall of Zulqarnayn has broken down long ago. Even this research is presumptive because the exact, conclusive and certain location of this wall is very difficult.

However, a person who is dexterous enough to compare Logical and Recorded Argument and also has a true insight in these matters may conclude that these historical and geographical findings are grade one presumptive, and the above interpretation of the verse is grade two presumptive. Hence, in view of these findings there is no harm in concluding that "Promise of the Lord" in this verse may also apply to the time when the wall was

predestined by Allah to break. Anwar Shah Kashmiri has expressed his inclination towards the same interpretation that Zulqarnayn did not mean to point to a sign of the end of the world, but it was a general statement that the wall would break when the Lord would like, and the coming out of Gog and Magog towards the approach of the Last Day mentioned in the Quran has nothing to do with the breaking of this wall.[71]

But, as stated above, this grading of the Presumptive Arguments is very delicate and it needs due and relevant proficiency and insight in the Logical and Recorded knowledge. Hence a great deal of caution, understanding and fear of God is needed, and a hasty decision through glitter of a prevalent theory often leads a man astray.

This has been the correct approach in recognizing logical and Recorded Argument that the 'ulamā have adopted. There has never been an objection on it.

## 3: INJUNCTIONS OF SHARI'AH AND REASONING

A very unfortunate use of reason and intellect in the exegesis of the Quran is to deny a religious injunction proven in clear and explicit words simply because we cannot understand the underlying wisdom behind it. The preponderance of western thoughts these days has led people to resort to self interpretation even in the explicit Quran and *Ḥadith* commands on which the Muslim *Ummah* has had a consensus over the last 1400 years, simply because these are against their temperament. They advance the reason that the religious laws are no longer expedient for our times. For instance, the Quran has explicitly

71: 'Aqīdat ul-Islam fi Ḥayāt Isa عليه السلام, Mawlana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, p197. Nafhat ul-Anber, Mawlāna Muḥammad Yousuf Binori, p158, Qisas ul Quran.

proclaimed the punishment for theft as under.

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوٓا أَيْدِيَهُمَا

And (as for) the thief, man or woman, cut off the hands of both... (Al-Mā'idah, 5:38)

The Western writers have been raising objections over this and other punishments proclaimed by Islam, and amputation of hands of the thieves is being termed as very severe, rather beastly. Hence the Modernists in the Islamic world who are ever apologetic to Westerner's objections are anxious to find ways of amending those Islamic punishments to please them. Hence they have been constantly trying to distort the meaning of the above verse. One of our contemporary writers has gone to the extent of writing in one of his articles that in this verse 'thief' means 'capitalists' and amputation of hands means 'to seize their factories.' According to him the verse does not describe the punishment for the thief but advocates that all the industries owned by capitalists must the nationalized!

The same applies to those people who are anxious to allow usury, gambling and intoxicants etc in some form or the other. Their argument is that the prohibition of these things in the present time is unreasonable.

Hence, as a matter of principle we must understand what the relation between the religious injunctions and reason is. What is the scope of reason and intellect in religious injunctions and what are its limitations?

The fact is that all the commands of the Qurān and *Ḥadith* are in conformity with commonsense, and each of them can be shown with irrefutable arguments that there is no better way to reform and prosperity for men. However, since there are many misunderstandings in this matter, this discussion will have to be divided into several

points. Here, are a few introductory remarks and only after a full understanding thereof can a correct result be achieved. But those who really want a satisfactory research in this matter are requested that they should not make a hasty decision after reading just one part of this discussion, but they must once read the entire discussion with full attention and a cool mind.

## (1) UNCHECKED REASONING VERSUS GUIDANCE AND ABERRANCE

As has been stated above, no doctrine of the Qurān and *Ḥadith* is against commonsense. But we find that the intellectual level of every person is different from the other. So, which of them should discriminate good from bad? If decision of the matters of the world and law making is done by unchecked reasoning which is free from all kinds of religious restrictions, the world would face an anarchy leading to total destruction of humanity. The reason is that if human mind is freed from all sorts of limitations and restrictions, it would also be unable to prove those moral realities which even a child of noble character recognises. For instance, having illicit relations with one's real sister is such a repulsive crime that no religion or people would tolerate it so much so that even the worst of the apostates regared it as deplorable. But if you set to prove this act to be unlawful on the basis .of free and unchecked reasoning, it would not be possible to do so. On the basis of pure intellectual reasoning the question that whenever a sister does every thing to give comfort to her brother, including cooking meals for him, preparing his bed, sewing his clothes, nursing him in sickness she is looked upon with praise and honour in the society. But if the same sister offers herself to her brother to satisfy his sexual lust, she receives the curses and abuses of the

whole world. If the matter is left to be decided on the basis of pure and unchecked mental reasoning she can rightly ask why sexual comfort is denied to her brother when he can receive other comforts from her? Within the limitations of moral and social values this question appears to be alarming, rather repulsive but a mind that does not bind itself to any limitations cannot be satisfied simply by telling it that this act is morally very repulsive. The question is what is wrong about it purely from intellectual point of view? You may say that it might lead to the problem of racial intermixing. But in the modern days of birth control this problem would not arise, and supposedly racial intermixing does occur you have to prove on purely intellectual grounds that this is a bad thing. A free thinker may say that there is nothing against racial intermixing and it is only a religious and moral taboo.

One might say that this is an extreme degree of shamelessness. But pure and free intellect would say that these concepts of modesty and shamelessness have been invented by religion, morals or society. From the intellectual point of view it is strange that if a woman marries a stranger and submits herself to him she is considered modest, but if she submits herself to a person with whom she has spent her childhood and youth, she would be charged with obscenity? You might say that human nature is against this act, but a free mind would say that there is no intellectual argument for it to be unnatural. In fact this appears unnatural because society has condemned it for many centuries. If these social bonds are broken and purely intellectual thought is applied there would be nothing bad in it. In short, if you want to solve this problem on purely intellectual grounds, it will never be solved.

And this is not just an hypothesis. Now-a-days this free thinking has already raised several such questions. In olden days also whenever anybody tried to solve social problems through pure intellect and free thinking he got lost in the labyrinth of intellectual questions and answers. A study of the *Bāṭiniyyah* sect is a living example. A famous leader of this sect 'Ubaidullah bin Al-Ḥasan Al-Qirwānī has written in his book' *As-Siyāsatu wal-balāgh-ul-Akīd wan Nāmūs al-A'ẓam*.

> "Who can be more surprising than those people who claim to possess intellect yet they act foolishly. They have a beautiful sister or daughter but hold it unlawful for themselves to have sex with her and hand her over to a stranger. If these fools had used their intelligence they would have realized that they themselves more deserved their sister or daughter than a stranger did. In fact the reason for ignorant behaviour is that their teachers and guides have prohibited them the pleasures of this world.[72]"

No matter how many curses you may hurl on this base and repulsive idea, yet you will not be able to give a convincing argument to refute it purely on the basis of intellect. The fact is that all those intellectuals of the world who plead for free thinking even together cannot give a satisfactory intellectual argument against this view.

The disgusting fact here is that this 'Ubaidullah Qirwāni was not an open rejector of the Qurān, but like others of the *Bāṭiniyyah*, he used to interpret it on the basis of unchecked free thinking. And he claimed that the obvious meanings of the Qurān are not the intended

72: Al-Farq baynal-Firaq Abdul Qāhir al-Baghdādi. p29.

meanings but it is all allegoric and metaphoric expressions or parables.

Likewise, it would not be possible to prohibit sexual abuse through pure intellectual reasoning because reason cannot answer the question what is wrong with sex with mutual consent of man and woman? It is on this argument that mutually agreed fornication is not unlawful in Western Laws. Rather, quite recently the British Parliament legalized voluntary homosexuality and the members applauded the legislation!

The reason for this law-making again was that on the basis of pure intellect there was nothing wrong in this act.

This is not surprising because, it is an essential attribute of man-made laws that they have always failed to guide man to peace and tranquility. The reason is obvious: the intellectual level of everyone is different from every other. Even if a general trend of a time may unite the people of that time to realise the good or bad of any act, the mental caliber of another time may form a different opinion for the same act, because intellect has no way to determine values.

Hence, despite innumerable intellectual arguments over several years, legal experts have been compelled to concede that they have been unable to decide what standards to fix for evaluating the good or bad of a thing in the process of law-making? A renowned legal expert of our time Dr. George Whitecross Paton has said:

"What interests should an examplary legal system protect? This is the question of values in which legal philosophy plays its part... But however much we desire the help of philosophy, it is difficult to obtain. No agreed scale of values has ever been reached indeed. It is only

> in religion that we can find a basis, and the truths of religion must be accepted by faith or intuition and not purely as the result of logical arguments."[73]

The same author continues to describe a very interesting story of those opinions and thoughts which different thinkers have expressed about the purpose of Law, its philosophy and its moral bases, but these opinions and thoughts have been so contradictory to each other that he stated:

> "What should be the purpose of Law? In this connection the opinion and concepts are as numerous as the number of authors on subject, because it will be exceptional to find such writers as may not have laid down an exemplary aim for the statute."

He further details how the philosophers of Law, in every period of time, had been increasing the complexities of this entangled string through the efforts of their intellect and thinking.

In the end he writes:

> "The Orthodox natural law theory based its absolutes on the revealed truths of religion. If we attempt to secularize jurisprudence, where can we find an agreed basis of values." (p126)

In short, if intellect is allowed a free hand by setting aside the guidance of Divine Revelations, there will be no basis left for discriminating good from bad or vice versa. It will have mankind in such a dark abyss of aberrance and foolishness where even a tiny ray of reform or guidance could not enter. The reason is that human intellect without the guidance of Divine Revelation (*Waḥy*), although regarded as 'Free and independednt', yet it becomes a slave

73: Paton: Jurisprudence 3rd Edit 1967, p121.

to man's sensual desires which is the worst form of mental servitude. Those who claim to follow pure intellect and reason in everything are actually suffering from the highest degree of self-deception. Those who openly admit that their intellect is not independent but a slave of their sensual desires are more courageous and truthful. A group of modern thinkers is mentioned in the discussion of philosophy of Law. Their philosophy is known as Non-cognitivist Ethical Theory. In the words of the famous legal expert of our time Dr. Friedman this philosophy is summerised as under:

> "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."

Dr. Friedman concludes the results of this thinking:

> "A simple injunction, modesty, yawning, rather the concepts of good or bad, or the phrases like 'ought' and 'worthy' are purely emotive and there cannot be such a thing as ethical or moral science."[74]

Notwithstanding their philosophy, what they say is correct that independent of Divine revelation (*Waḥy*) there remains nothing of reason or moral. After that man's existence, his deeds and actions are all governed by his passions and desires and they take him wherever they want to. Even if his conscience pricks, he is not able to go against his passions. In England the step to legalise homosexuality was taken in the same state of compulsion. Some thinkers disliked it and even the conscience of the movers of the law was not satisfied. But as slaves to their passions, they could not set aside the demand for this law. How admonishing are the following words of recommendation of Wolfenden Committee on the basis of

74: Friedman: Legal Theory, London 1967 p36-37.

which this law was passed:

> "Unless a deliberate attempt is made by society acting through the agency of the law to equate fear of crime with that of sin, there must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which in brief and crude terms is beyond the law."[75]

But the Qurān which will not leave mankind wandering in the labyrinth of passions, and which is a guide to the clear and straight path, is explicit that man's natural disposition is bestowed on both, good and bad passions. It will not leave its followers in frightful darkness. In its terminology independent reasoning free of guidance from *Waḥy* is termed as caprice (Hawā), and about which it has stated as under:

وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ .

And had the truth followed their caprices, the heavens and the earth and whosoever is between them would have certainly corrupted. (Al-Mumineen, 23:71)

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ○

Is he who has a clear proof from his Lord like those to whom their evil deeds are made alluring and they follow their caprices? (Surah, Muhammad, 47:14)

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ

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75: Friedman: Legal Theory, London, 1967 p46.

أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ○

And obey not him whose heart We have made to neglect Our remembrance and his affair has become all excess. (Al-Kahf, 18:28)

فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدٰى ○

So let not him, who believes not in it, and follows his own caprice, bar you from it, lest you perish. (Tā-Hā, 20:16)

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ

And who is more astray than he who follows his caprice without any guidance from Allah? (Al-Qaṣaṣ, 48:50)

فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ أُمِرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ

Therefore you (O Prophet) invite them to this (religion) and be steadfast as you are commanded; and follow not their caprices. (Ash-Shūrā, 42:15)

أَفَكُلَّمَا جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوٰىٓ أَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ

Is it then that whensoever there came to you a Messenger with what your souls desired not, you showed arrogance. (Al-Baqarah, 2:87)

In short, Islam is not based on an intellect that is a slave to caprices, but on the intellect that is bound by guidance from Allah and is aware of the limitations of its activity. And this is what forms a balanced mind.

## (2) PRUDENCE BEHIND ISLAMIC INJUNCTIONS AND THEIR PLACE IN RELIGION

This does not mean that the commands proclaimed by Allah are against the intellect. But the fact is that the commands of Allah fully conform to common sense, and experience shows that there can be no better means to reform and prosperity. Hence every command of Allah has many expediencies in it and benefits for mankind. But it is not essential that our limited faculty of reasoning should encompass those expediencies. Who can comprehend the knowledge and understand the wisdom of the Creator of universe Who has before Him all that is present in the earth and skies and all the events of past and the future? Hence it is quite possible that we do not understand the wisdom behind an injunction of the Qurān and *Sunnah*. But this does not mean that we reject the injunction because of that. If man had been able to know what benefits him there was no need to send the Messengers and Divine Scriptures. This was done only to educate mankind on matters the cognition of which is not possible through intellect alone. Hence, if one believes in Allah, His Omnipotence, His limitless knowledge, His Messengers and the Divine Scriptures revealed by Him, one cannot escape admitting that it is not essential to know the expediencies of His injunctions. It will not be a reasonable attitude to reject such of His injunctions as are beyond one's intellectual comprehension.

This can be well understood through an example. Everywhere in the world the laws the law-makers have their reasons for framing, the laws and it is in accordance with them that the law is enforced. But it is not necessary

that every individual of the country be aware of all the considerations of that law. Evidently a majority of people are not aware of the merits of the limitations imposed through such a law. Can the law made by the best brains of the country, after due consideration of all its implications, be said to be worthless or wrong because a few illiterate rustics cannot comprehend the advantages of that law? If an ignorant person refuses to comply with the law simply on the basis that the expedient advantages of that law are beyond his comprehension, his place would be nothing but prison.

Besides, one can conceive some relationship between the knowledge of an illiterate person and an expert in law, but no relationship can be established between the limitless knowledge of the Creator of this Universe and an ordinary human being. How can it be appropriate for a man to reject an explicit Command of Allah or interpolate and misinterpret it on the ground that he cannot understand the advantages therein.

## (3) INJUNCTIONS DO NOT DEPEND ON EXPEDIENCIES

There has always been a consensus in every period of time that religious injunctions do not depend on their expediences but on the motives behind it. There are many people in our time who do not understand the difference between "Expedience (Prudence)" and "Motive". It seems proper to clarify this briefly.

"Motive" is an essential cause for enforcement of Law. It is like an obvious sign which bids the followers of that law to comply as soon as they have observed the sign. "Expedience" is the advantage and consideration before the law makers when framing the law. For instance, the Qurān has proclaimed prohibition of

alcoholic drinks, and made intoxication as the essential basis of prohibition. Any drink that causes intoxication is forbidden.

There are many expediencies in this prohibition, one of which is that intoxicated people may not indulge in such acts as are against human dignity and honour. In this example the Qurān's expression "Abstain from (alcoholic) drinks" is a command 'Intoxication' is the motive of the command, and preventing people from evildoings on losing their senses is the expedient in it. Now, the command of prohibition would depend on its motive, that is, Intoxication, and anything that causes intoxication would be considered as forbidden. The command would not depend on the expedient behind it. Hence, it is wrong for anybody to plead that he should not be forbidden alcoholic drinks because he does not lose his senses or gets out of balance after taking it. Or if it is argued that at present advanced methods of brewing alcoholic drinks have minimized the harmful effects and a large number of drinkers do carry out their normal duties without suffering intoxication, hence it should now be permissible, obviously this plea would not be accepted.

Similarly, the Qurān and *Sunnah* command their followers that during a journey they should offer only half of *Ṣalah* (which is known as 'Qaṣr' قصر) to alleviate their worship. In this example 'Qaṣr' قصر is a command, journey is its motive and saving from hardship is the expediency. Now, the command will depend on its motive, that is, the journey and not on the expediency. Hence if some one says that now-a-days due to aeroplanes and comfortable train coaches, the journey has become easy and the hardship of earlier times does not exist, therefore the command for "*Qaṣr*" no longer exists, his

plea would not be accepted. As slaves of Allah our task is to obey the Command on its motive. To keep in view the expediences and considerations in obeying these commands is not our prerogative.

This rule does not apply only to Islamic Laws, but it is practiced in all the prevalent laws of today. For instance, the government has made a law, in order to check traffic accidents. When a red light is seen at a crossing, every vehicle must stop. Here "stop" is a Law, red light is its motive, and prevention from accidents is the expediency behind the law. Now the command will be obeyed on its motive, the red light, and not on the expediency of prevention from accidents. If a driver feels that there is no apparent danger of an accident and violates the red light, he will be a law-offender and liable to punishment. Hence it is essential to stop at the red light even if there is no danger of an accident.

Thus, observance of the laws depends on the motives and not on expediencies. When this holds good for the common laws of the world, the commands of Allah deserve all the more to be so respected. One reason for this is that we cannot comprehend all the expediences of every religious law; hence if the injunctions are subjected to expediences it is possible that we may choose only a single benefit while there may be many other expediences too. The second reason is that expedience is generally not an unchanging thing so that every one may take his own decision in dealing with a particular strategy. If an injunction is held dependent on expediences, the laws can never be implemented because then every person would be free to make an excuse that he did not comply with such and such order because its expediences were not obvious. For instance, if every driver is given the freedom to decide at a crossing

whether there is a danger of accident or not and he would stop when he sees a danger otherwise he may proceed even on a green light. This will only result in extreme degree of misrule and maladministration. Similarly, if the prohibition of wine is dependant on its expediency rather than motive (intoxication), then every one will say that he is not liable to the prohibition because he is not intoxicated and his work is not hampered. The prohibition will then be played with.

Contrary to this, the motives of all the commands are so evident that every one can see that a motive exists, and hence defiance of law can be easily checked. It is only through subjecting the laws to their motives that social administration, peace and tranquillity, and law-abiding spirit can be produced in this world.

It is for this reason that many scholars of Muslim *Ummah* have written voluminous books to explain expediences and strategies behind Islamic injunctions, and have told about every injunction as to what benefits can be derived from it. But neither has anyone claimed that he knows the expediences of all Islamic injunctions nor has anyone suffered from the misunderstanding that the injunctions will be obeyed after considering the expediences and strategies behind them. For instance, Shāh Wali Ullah Dehlavi wrote his book *Ḥujjat-ul-lahil Bāl-ighah* for the sole purpose of clarifying the expediences inherent in religious laws and he has categorically refuted those who deny the expediences of religious laws. But alongwith it he states:[76]

لا يحل ان يتوقف فى امتثال احكام الشرع اذا صحت بها

76: Hujjat-ul-lahil Bāl igah, Maktaba Salfiyah, Lahore, 1395, AH v1, p129. Also chapter Bab-al-Farq Bain-al-Maṣāleh wal Sharā'i.

الرواية علٰى معرفة تلك المصالح لعدم استقلال عقول كثير من الناس فى معرفة كثير من المصالح ولكون النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم اوثق عندنا من عقولنا ولذلك لم يزل هٰذا العلم مضنونا به علٰى غير اهله ـ

"It is certainly not right to hesitate in complying with authentic religious injunctions because we do not know expediences behind them. The mental calibre of many people is such that they cannot comprehend many of these expediences and for us the Holy Prophet ﷺ is more reliable than our intellect. That is why attempts have always been made to protect this science (of expediences in religion) from incompetent people."

## (4) THE REAL PURPOSE OF QURĀNIC INJUNCTIONS IS TO SET TO OBEDIENCE

Another thing to be kept in view about the injunctions of the Qurān is 'worship of Allah' The Qurān says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ ○

And I have not created the jinn and mankind but to worship Me. (Az-Zāriyāt, 51:56)

And the way of such worship has also been clarified by the Qurān, that it depends on total submission to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. It says:

اِتَّبِعُوْا مَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ

Follow (O mankind) what has revealed to you from your Lord, and follow no protectors besides Him. (Al-A'rāf, 7:3)

يَاقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ۝ اتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَّا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ۝

O my people! Follow the Messengers. Follow such as ask of you no reward, and they are rightly guided. (Yāsīn, 36:20-21)

وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا أَحْسَنَ مَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ

And follow the best (the Qurān) that has been revealed to you from your Lord. (Az-Zumar, 39:55)

وَهٰذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ وَاتَّقُوْا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ۝

And this (Qurān) is a blessed Book that We have revealed, so follow it, and be God-fearing that you may be shown mercy (Al-An'ām, 6:155)

فَآمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِيْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَاتَّبِعُوْهُ

Therefore believe in Allah and His Messenger, the "*Ummi*" Prophet who believes in Allah and His words (Commandments): and follow him....

(Al-A'raf, 7:158)

It is Qurān that has clarified the purpose of man's creation and subjecting him to different commands is to see who follows Allah and His Messenger and who does not.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

(Allah it is) Who created death and life, that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct. (Al-Mulk, 67:2)

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقِبَيْهِ

And We appointed not the Qiblah which you (O Prophet) have had except in order that We might know who followed the Messenger, from him who turned back on his heels. (Al-Baqarah, 2:143)

And when the duty of man is just to obey Allah and His Messenger, and histrial is based on this obligation, it becomes obligatory on him to submit to whatever explicit Command he receives from Allah. Thereafter he is not entitled to accept it if he likes it, and reject if he dislikes it.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُوْنَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ

And it is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, to have the choice in their matter.

(Al-Aḥzāb, 33:36)

Hence if someone hesitates in accepting the explicit command of Allah and His Messenger on the plea that he is unable to comprehend the strategy and expedience in it, he is in fact following his passions or the devil rather than his intellect.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِي اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّرِيْدٍ ۝

And among mankind is he who disputes concerning Allah, without knowledge, and follows every rebellious Satan. (Al-Ḥajj, 22:3)

Such a person will be a loser not only in the Hereafter but also in this world.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهٗ خَيْرُ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهٖ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ ۝

And among mankind is he who worships Allah upon the very edge — so that if good befalls him he is contented with it, but if a trial befalls him he turns round on his face. He loses this world and the Hereafter. That is indeed a manifest loss. (Al-Ḥajj, 22:11)

Hence, although every commandment of Allah and His Messenger has behind it countless expediences yet it is not for man that he should know the real purpose of compliance to these commands. Like a true servant of Allah his real object should be obedience to Allah, His pleasure and submission to His Commandments. When prohibition of usury was revealed, the disbelievers objected to it and said:

قَالُوْٓا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا

They say "Trade is just like usury."

(Al-Baqarah, 2:275)

Many intellectual arguments could have been given against this saying and the difference between trade and

usury could have been explained. But ignoring all that the Qurān gave one genuine reply:

وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا

But Allah has permitted trading, and forbidden usury.
(Al-Baqarah, 2:275)

So, when Allah permitted one thing and forbade the other, there remained no room for intellectual arguments. It should be sufficient for you that the two of them have different injunctions.

The Qurān has described the story of Ādam and Iblīs at tens of places. In this incident, it has been mentioned that in refusing to prostrate before Ādam, Iblīs argued, "I am better than Ādam. You created me from fire and him from mud." What is wrong in this argument from the point of view of reasoning? But, the same Intellectual argument became the cause of his disgraceful expulsion from Paradise. The reason was that submission to one's own arguments after receiving clear and explicit injunctions from Allah is in fact enslavement to one's passions.

## (5) CORRECT METHOD OF INTERPRETING THE QURĀN AND TRADITIONS

So, when man is obliged to submit to the commands of Allah the simple way to do it is to adopt the obvious meaning in the clear and explicit commands of the Qurān and *Sunnah*. Misinterpretation and interpolation should not be done simply because the obvious meanings do not please oneself. Allah has revealed His Book for our guidance and also because we cannot comprehend His commands only through our intellect and reasoning. If we read our own meanings in the interpretation of the Qurān, we will be following

our own whims and the purpose of the Qurān will be defeated.

The Qurān is an extremely exalted Book, but the case with man-made rules is that as soon as they are passed by Parliament, judges become bound to follow them as they are. Even if a law appears to be wrong in a judge's knowledge and experience, he is compelled to follow it as it is. There is no room for him to make such interpretations of law which are not obvious from its words and phrases. In the present 'Principles of Law' there is a constant discussion on 'Interpretation of statutes'. The summary of this discussion, as adopted from *A Text Book of Jurisprudence* by Paton is as under:

> "Three fundamental rules have been suggested for the interpretation of statues in English law-suits. The first principle is called 'Literal Rule'. It means that wherein the meanings of a legal clause are quite obvious it will be taken as it is, irrespective of its result. The second principle is called 'Golden Rule' which means that the words of the statute will always be given its common meanings unless it creates confusion or it openly clashes with other clauses of the Law. The third principle is called 'Mischief Rule' which emphasises on determining as to what is the general policy of this Law and eradiction of which mischief is aimed at."

Further on, this third principle has been explained by Paton.

> "The concept that the intention of the Parliament and the purpose behind that must be followed does not allow us much liberty with the words of

> the statute. This is because it is an established fact that the subjective intention of Parliament cannot be considered while interpreting the statutes. Rather, even the intention of the Parliament has to be derived from the statute framed by it."[77]

This is the state of Law which human intellect has drafted and about which the experts of Law themselves admit according to Paton.

> It would be exaggerative to say that every man has a valid reason for each of his action. On the contrary, it happens very often that we perform an act and think later. This attitude is not confined to the situations similar to jumping away to a side to save ourselves from a speeding car, but very often it also occurs when we create social customs and habits. Rather, if a reasonable policy has already been framed at the time of forming a statute or an institution, even then it happens quite frequently that the result of such a staturte is quite different from the purpose which prompted the formation of that statute.[78]

But a judge, despite knowledge that the required result cannot be achieved from the existing structure of Law, is bound to obey the law as its words present it. He has no right to mould it through meanings not obvious from the words even though they may be nearer to the required results. Rather, as Paton says:

> "If unjustified laws are in force somewhere, the legislature can abrogate them but the judge is bound to follow those laws no matter how much

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77: Paton, A Text Book of Jurisprudence, p217.
78: Paton, A Text Book Jurisprudence p21.

he dislikes the rules of such laws."[79]

A judge is not a law-maker but interpreter of Law. His status is not that of framer of laws but of one who obeys the Law, and he can interpret it only within the limits of obedience. He has no authority to cross those limits over to Reform and Amendment.

This is the state of those man-made Laws wherein thousands of possibilities of intellectual errors exist in which neither the Law-maker is above suspicion nor can mind and thoughts of the Law makers be said to be free of errors. There is no guarantee too, that they have given due thought and consideration to all possible results of that law.

Then again, these are the laws made by men who do not even know what changes the coming days would bring, nor do they know whether their expected results would be achieved through this Law or not.

So, when obedience to the Laws made through conjecture and assumption is so essential, what reason, moral and justice would support the idea of seeking uncommon and ambiguous meanings to one's liking or disliking in the laws made by the Creator of this universe. He is the CreatorWho is fully aware of changing circumstances of time, and Who knows the benefits and losses of man and expediences in it?

## (6) CHANGES OF TIME AND RELIGIOUS LAWS

Another misunderstanding must also be removed here. Now-a-days it is common to hear almost every modernist say that no Law should ever be static but it should be dynamic in accordance with the circumstances. It is particular with Modernist mind that

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79: Ibid p211

if anything is bad in some sense then it is bad in every sense. Its very name becomes an abuse. And if a thing is good, it will be valued highly and its use here and there becomes a fashion. The same is the case with the terms Static and Dynamic. To denounce the former and praise the latter has become the scientific fashion of today. Every Modernist will detest everything called Static and shall rejoice with the label of Dynamic on anything. That is why no moral or religious idea in the ideological system of the west has remained static. Rather they have subjected it to grinding on the lathe of Dynamism, and no religious belief or moral principle has escaped it.

The fact is that neither the continuous Static condition is beneficial for mankind nor a perpetual Dynamic state. Whereas in order to lead a good life in this world, man needs to keep changing his practical strategies, it is also essential that he should possess some principles and laws which should not be altered under any circumstances. At any period of time, even the biggest power on earth should not amend it, otherwise under the camouflage of change beastly and sensual desires can take him to the extreme limits of mischief, violence and moral bankruptcy where he would take off all the garments of human morality and join the ranks of nude animals. If there be freedom of changing at will, every intellectual principle, every moral system and every legal order by labelling it as Dynamic, the result cannot be anything except the moral destruction, human degradation, anxiety and agitation that has become the destiny of the Western society of our time.

When it is agreed that all intellectual principles and legal orders should not be dynamic but there must be some laws that should never change, the only problem

remains to chose the orders of the law that should remain Static and which of Dynamic. If this problem is considered by pure Intellect' the limitations therein have already been thoroughly exposed. Even if we try, we can never achieve such static rules and laws which would be unanimously accepted by all human beings. This is because the intellectual decisions and results of individual thinking are different from one another. Thus one person or group would resort to one principle as static and a second person or group to another, and the problem will remain as it was. Hence the solution to this problem lies in seeking guidance from the Being Who created mankind, and also knows the secrets of their inner selves. The way to seek this guidance is to turn towards His revelations and to the traditions of His Prophet ﷺ.

When we turn towards the Qurān and Prophetic traditions we see that they clearly and explicitly describe injunctions but are content to describe the broad principles only in some cases, and avoid subsidiary details. The Qurān and the Messenger of Allah, Muḥammad ﷺ are not confined to any region or time but cover every place and time, the injunctions that do not change with time have been described in the Qurān and *Ḥadith* clearly and explicitly and sometimes their subsidiary details have also been determined. Contrary to this, as for the injunctions that were liable to be affected by the change of time, the Qurān and Prophetic Traditions describe some general universal principles in the light of which learned persons of every time may determine and establish the subsidiary details.

Thus the injunctions that are explicit in the Qurān and *Ḥadith*, and on whom the *Ummah* has had a consensus, are absolutely unalterable and obligatory for every period

of time. If that were not so they would not have been explicitly ordained through the Qurān and *Hadith*. However, those injunctions which are not explicitly ordained in the Qurān and Traditions and there has not been a consensus of the *Ummah*, there is room for *ijtihād* in accordance with the principles of the Qurān and Traditions of the Prophet. Changes of times can influence such injunctions and it is about these injunctions that the jurists have said:

الا حكام تتغير بتغير الزمان

> "Injunctions keep changing with the change of Time."

If on the other hand, there was room for alterations and amendments with change of time in the clear and explicit injunctions of the Qurān and Prophetic traditions, there was no need for sending the Messengers and revealing the Divine Scriptures. Just one injunction would have been sufficient, 'Formulate your own injunctions and Laws according to the circumstances of the time.' Hence, the person who points out at changes of Time in spite of clear and explicit injunctions of the Qurān or, on the same basis, is eager to give self-conceived meanings and alter and interpolate the explicit injunctions of the Qurān and Prophetic Traditions, he is in fact unaware of the basic purpose of sending the Prophets and of revelation of Divine Scriptures.

## (7) MEANING OF *CHANGE OF TIME*?

At this stage it is essential to have a clear conception of what is meant by "change of time." The change of time that influences the religious injunctions is that change due to which the Motive[80] of an injunction changes. For instance, jurists of earlier days ruled that if a person hires a horse and does not settle with the owner of the horse what distance he would travel on it and what the fare would be then this deal would be void and unlawful. But now-a-days with the invention of metered taxis this injunction does not remain valid. People do not settle anything with the taxi-driver befôre sitting in it, and none of them knows what the total fare would be, yet this dealing is lawful. The reason is that the Motive behind the maxim described by earlier jurists, according to their statement was a great possibility of dispute between the parties concerned if the fare and distance were not settled beforehand. Now the time has changed and with the invention of metres the practice has become that the parties agree to go by the metre. Hence the chance of a dispute does not exist, which was Motive for making the deal as unlawful. Thus, with this change of time injunction also changed.

Contrary to this, when the motive of injunctions is unaffected no change in the injunctions can be made on the basis of general trend of the Time. There is no room in Islam for the concept that if an evil spreads it should be endorsed as lawful and permissible, and if the good things are abandoned, they should be forsaken. This defeated mentality ultimately leads to the very passion-worship against which the Qurān has been

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80: For the meaning of "Motive" see page 445'.

revealed and to free from enslavement of which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent.

## (8) APPROPRIATE SPHERE OF ACTIVITY OF INTELLECT AND REASON

The summary of the above discussion is that it is not at all correct to seek distant and uncommon meanings through distortion and interpolation of the Qurān and Prophetic Traditions after being impressed by general trend of the times or to present an excuse of change of Time. The injunctions explicitly ordained in the Qurān and Prophetic Traditions are those which are not affected by the change of Time, no matter how strange and alien they might appear to those influenced by changes in Time and wave of passions. Hence, on these occasions introducing intellectual explanations in religious injunctions is not common sense but is slavery to passions which is nothing but extreme veering off the path.

The fact is that commonsense itself demands that the limits of human brain should be recognized and no such burden beyond its endurance be put on it. In this universe, the capacity and capability of everything except Allah has some limitations beyond which it does not work. Intellect is also a component of this universe and its capabilities are also not unlimited. Allah has guided mankind through Divine Scriptures and Prophets towards the same realities and injunctions in search of which human intellect could stumble. Hence, to forward intellectual expediences against the explicit injunctions of these Scriptures and Prophets is like testing an aeroplane engine on the principles of train engine.

In the end, it is also essential to keep in mind that the above discussion does not at all mean that intellect is left

with no application in human life after having established Faith in the Qurān and Traditions. The reason is that, of all the deeds which a man has to face, there are very few which religion has decreed as obligatory, incumbent, traditional, desirable, forbidden or detestable. But there are innumerable actions which have been termed as allowable. It is the sphere of these allowables which forms an expansive ground for reason and intellect wherein religion does not interfere. To adopt one or to leave another of these allowables has been left to the descretion of intellect and reason, the use of which can take man to highest achievements of material progress and scientific discoveries, and allow him to reap rightful benefits out of them. As against this, interference with the Divine injunctions has resulted in the scientific and technological advancements to have caused torment and disruption instead of benefiting mankind. This has resulted from the fact that the burden placed on intellect had been beyond its capacity, and which a human being cannot bear without absolute submission to Divine Revelations.

The great scholar of the philosophy of history Ibn Khaldūn has given a very beautiful description in this connection, as under.[81]

فاتهم ادراكك و مدركا تك فى الحصر، واتبع ما امرك الشارع
من اعتقادك و عملك، فهو احرص علٰى سعاد تك، واعلم بما
ينفعك لانه من طور فوق ادراكك و من نطاق اوسع من نطاق
عقلك وليس ذلك بقادح فى العقل ومداركه، بل العقل ميزان
صحيح، فاحكامه يقينية لا كذب فيها، غير انك لا تطمع ان تزن

81: Muqaddamah, Ibn Khaldūn.

به امور التوحيد و الأخرة و حقيقة النبوة و حقائق الصفات الألهية و كل ما وراء طوره، فان ذلك طمع فى محال، و مثال ذلك مثال رجل رآى الميزان الذى يوزن به الذهب، فيطمع ان يزن به الجبال، هذا لا يدرك على ان الميزان فى احكامه غير صادق، لكن العقل يقف عنده ولا يتعدى طوره ـ

"Hence you are wrong in relying on your knowledge and information (whatever We know encompasses the knowledge of all creation) but you must follow the beliefs and deeds explained by the interpreter (the Prophet ﷺ) because he is your greatest well-wisher and knower of your welfare. His knowledge is higher than yours and is obtained from a source better than the sphere of your intellect. And this is not a defect for intellect and its know-how. Rather, intellect is in fact a correct criterion whose decisions are certain and free of falsehood. But this criterion is not large enough to allow you to weigh the matters of unity of Allah, Prophethood, attributes of Allah or any other thing which is outside the scope of reason. It is like a person may wish to weigh a mountain on the scale that weighs gold. Evidently (when the mountains would not weigh in it,) it would not be said that the scale is false. But it would be said that every seale has a limit beyond which it cannot work. Similarly the scale of human intellect also stays still at a certain point and cannot cross its limits."

Similarly, the Qurān and Prophetic Traditions have left many things to the deliberation and deductions of the jurists. Hence, for those who are competent in this task, deduction of injunctions in the light of Qurān and

Traditions and laws of religion provides another vast field for the use of intellect and reason. Jurists in all times have been tried for their genius in this field. However, one should not be tempted to interpolate the Qurān and *Ḥadith* and try to weigh a mountain on the scale for weighing gold.

To end the discussion we quote 'Allāmah Shabbir Aḥmad 'Uthmāni:

It is not the intention to decry thought and reason as useless and absurd. Or that their application is a religious sin. But yes! We do not permit an individual that he should put his inept reasoning and intellect at par with the pure and clear, true and accurate, high and exalted teachings of the Prophets عليهم السلام on which very often his own conscience pricks him from inside. Against this it is essential that man should base his intellectual knowledge on the sayings of Allah and His Messengers and submit to them. Whatever they have said, he should take it as the panacea or cure ste't the diseases of his soul and submit to it by all means saying:

سمعا و طاعة

I hear it, and I submit to it.

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُحَاجُّوْنَ فِي اللّٰهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيْبَ لَهٗ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۝

And those who argue concerning Allah after He has been acknowledged, their argument is void with their Lord, and upon them is wrath, and for them is a severe chastisement.[82] (As-Shūra, 42:16)

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82: Al-'Aql-wan Naql, Mawlanā Shabhīr Aḥmad Uthmanī p95. Idārah Islamiyāt, Lahore 1396 AH.

CHAPTER-4

# SOME EXEGETES OF EARLY ERA

We had intended to describe a detailed and expansive history of the Science of Exegesis, but due to several reasons the idea had to be abandoned. In addition, proper books on this subject have been published too.[83] Hence, instead of a complete history of the Science of Exegesis we wish to give a description of only some commentators belonging to the first era and whose references occur in very large numbers in the books of exegesis. The purpose of this description is that if the following discussions are kept in view while making an exegesis of the Qurān, it will be easier to make true deductions from the sayings of these people.

## 'ABDULLAH IBN 'ABBĀS

There is of course a large group of the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who are known for their service to exegesis of the Qurān. But among them 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās ؓ has attained a distinctive position. The basic reason is that Holy Prophet ﷺ had specifically prayed for proficiency in exegesis for him. It is related in several traditions that the Prophet ﷺ placed his hand on the head of 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās ؓ and prayed:

83: For instance, Tārīkh ul-Qurān and Tārīkh at-Tafsīr, Professor 'Abdus. Ṣamad Ṣārim.

اللهم فقهه فى الدين و علمه التاويل ۔

O Allah give him the comprehension of religion and bestow on him the knowledge of exegesis.

And at another time the Prophet ﷺ said,

اللهم بارك فيه وانشر منه ۔[84]

O Allah give him abundance in it and spread Your religion through him.

And according to some narrations the Prophet ﷺ addressed him in the words

نعم ترجمان القرآن انت ۔[85]

You are a good interpreter of the Qurān.

That is why the Companions used to remember him with the titles of ترجمان القرآن (Interpreter of the Qurān),[86] الحبر (great Scholar), البحر (Ocean of Knowledge). Even eminent Companions used to turn towards him in matters of exegesis despite his young age, and his opinion was widely respected.

He has himself said, "After the death of the Prophet ﷺ I said to one of the Ansārs that there were still a number of Companions alive, so we should seek knowledge (of religion) from them. He replied, 'Do you think that people will need your knowledge (for which you are preparing from now)?' And hence he did not accompany me and I set on the task alone. I used to go to different Companions and learn many things from them. Some times I would go to a Companion and if he was resting at noon time I would wait

84: Al- Iṣā bah, Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar v2.
85: Al-Itqān v2 p187. Ref: Ḥilyatul Auliyā, Abi Nu'aym.
86: Ibid.

outside his door while hot wind used to blow sand on my face when the Companion used to come out he would say, 'O cousin of the Prophet ﷺ why did you trouble yourself? You should have sent for me and I would have come to you' I replied, 'No, it was my duty to come to you.' Then I used to ask him about the *Ḥadith* for which I had gone to him. This practice continued. The Anṣār Companion who had refused to join me in this campaign lived a long time afterwards until he saw me in the state that people had surrounded me and were asking me questions. At that time he said, This young man was more clever than me.'"[87]

'Ubaidullah bin 'Ali bin Abi Rāfi' has stated that Ibn 'Abbās used to go to Abu Rāfi' ؓ and ask him what did the Prophet ﷺ do on such and such day? With him used to be another man who used to write whatever was said by Abu Rāfi' ؓ.[88]

A time came when there was always a large number of students around him and he taught them the exegesis of the Qurān, the Prophetic Traditions and Juridical maxims etc.[89]

It was for these reasons that 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās was called "*Imām-ul-Mufassirīn*" (The leader of commentators) and a great many narrations have been quoted from him in connection with exegesis of the Qurān. However, a large part of these narrations are weak in authenticity. Hence, in order to benefit from his narrations they must be verified according to the rules of *Ḥadith*. Certain things in this connection must be remembered — They are.

1: The most reliable narrations of Ibn 'Abbās are those reported in the sequence of Abu Ṣāliḥ from Mu'āwiyah bin Ṣāliḥ from 'Ali bin 'Ali Ṭalḥa from Ibn 'Abbās. In

87: Al- Iṣābah, v2, p323. Ref: Musnad Dārami and Musnad Ḥārith bin Abi Usāmah, Tazkiratul Ḥuffāẓ, Zahbi v1, p38.

88: Ibid. Masnad Ru'yāni.

89: Al- Iṣābah, v2, p325. Al-Istī'āb 'alā Hāmish Al- Iṣābah v2, p347.

the times of Imām Aḥmad a collection of exegesis of Ibn 'Abbās was available in Egypt with this line of transmission. Imām Aḥmad used to say about it, "It will not be extraordinary if anyone travels to Egypt only to obtain a copy of this exegesis." Later on, however, this transcript became extinct but many commentators and Traditionists have reported excerpts from it in their books. Imām Bukhāri has quoted many of its narrations in his Ṣaḥīḥ, and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim and Ibnul Munzir have also reported many narrations in the same sequence.[90]

2: A misunderstanding by Goldzi'her: At this point it would be proper to invite attention to a misunderstanding created by the famous Orientalist Goldzi'her in his book "Mazāhib ut Tafsīr-al-Islāmi", as is to be expected.

"The Muslim critics of *Ḥadith* themselves admit that 'Ali bin Abi Ṭalḥā himself did not hear these exegetic remarks from Ibn 'Abbās which he has mentioned in this book.This is the verdict of the Islamic critics of *Ḥadith* about the collection of exegesis of Ibn 'Abbās which is regarded as most acceptable."[91]

But Goldziher has omitted to say that whereas expert critics of *Ḥadith* have written that while Ali bin Abi Ṭalḥā had not heard these narrations from Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ali bin Abi Ṭalḥā had adopted some of these reports from Mujāhid and some from Sa'īd bin Jubayr. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar states.[92]

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90: Al-Itqān, v2, p188.

91: Madhāhibut Tafsīr ul Islami, Goldziher. Arabic translation Doctor Abdul Ḥalīm Najjār, p98.

92: Al-Itqān v2 p188. Tahdhīb ut Tahdhīb v7, p239.

بعد ان عرفت الواسطة وھی ثقة فلا ضیر فی ذٰلك۔

When intermediate link is found and is reliable, no problem then remains.

Apart from this sequence of 'Ali bin Ṭalḥā the narrations of Ibn 'Abbās have other narrations which are either absolutely correct (saḥīḥ) or good (Ḥasan) They are for example, Abu Thaur from Ibn Jurayḥ from Ibn 'Abbās or, Ḥajjāj bin Muhammad from Ibn Jurayh from Ibn 'Abbās, or Qays from 'Aṭā' bin Sāib from S'ad bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās, or Ibn ul Isḥāq from Muḥammad bin Abi Muḥammad from 'Ikrimah or Sa'īd bin Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbās, etc.'

3: The narrations of Ibn 'Abbās reported from following sources are weak.

a) Muḥammad bin Sā'ib Al-Kalbī from Abi Ṣāliḥ from Ibn 'Abbās; and when Muhammad bin Marwān-as-Suddyyi-as-Saghīr reports from Kalbī this is regarded by authorities as a false sequence. Of the commentators Th'ālaba and Wāḥidī have reported a vast number of narrations from this sequence.

b) Ḍaḥḥāk bin Muzāḥim from Ibn 'Abbās. This is weak because Ḍaḥḥāk is not known to have met Ibn 'Abbās and if Bishr bin 'Ammārah from Abi Rūq be the reporter from Ḍaḥḥāk, the sequence becomes weaker because Bishr bin 'Ammārah himself is weak, and if Juwaibir be the reporter from Ḍaḥḥāk it becomes weaker because Juwaibir is most unreliable.

c) 'Aṭiyyah al-'Aufī from Ibn 'Abbās: This is weak because of low profile of 'Aṭiyyah al 'Aufī. However, some poeple consider it as good (Ḥasan) because Tirmizī has appreciated the reports of 'Aṭiyyah. A detailed discussion in this matter will follow in the report on 'Aṭ iyah al-'Aufī.'

d) Muqātil bin Sulaymān from Ibn 'Abbās: This is also weak due to low profile of Muqātil whose state will be discussed later.[93]

## TRUTH ABOUT THE PREVALENT EXEGESIS OF IBN 'ABBĀS (TAFSĪR IBN-'ABBĀS)

4: A book by the name of *Tanvīr-ul-miq'yās fi Tafsīr* Ibn 'Abbās has been published in our times which is generally considered as exegesis of Ibn 'Abbās. Its Urdu translation has also been published, but it is wrong to ascribe it to Ibn 'Abbās because this book has been based on the reported sequence of Muhammad bin Marwān-as-Suddy from Muhammad bin Sā'ib al-Kalbī from Abi Ṣāleḥ from Ibn 'Abbās.[94]

We have stated in the foregoing lines that this has been regarded by Traditionists as a 'chain of falsehood' and hence cannot be relied upon.

## 'ALI ﷺ IBN ABU ṬALIB

Sayyidina 'Ali ﷺ holds a very high place in the exegesis of the Qurān. Since the first three caliphs had died early, only a few exegetic narrations have been reported from them, but Sayyidina Ali ﷺ remained busy in the learning of Islam for a very long time and there are many narrations reported from him. His eminent position in the Science of Exegesis can be estimated from the fact that Abu Tufayl says:

"I saw 'Ali delivering an address in which he said, 'Ask me questions about the Book of Allah, because, By God! There is no verse of the Qurān about which I do not know whether it was

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93: This complete report is adopted from al-Itqān v2, p188-189 See also the report on the narration that follows.

94: Tanwīr al Miqyās, p1.

revealed at night or during the day, on the ground or on the mountain".[95]

Since Sayydina Ali ﷺ had settled in Kufah (Iraq), his teachings mostly spread in that area, and most of his narrations have been reported by people of Kūfah.

## ABDULLAH BIN MAS'ŪD ﷺ

He is also one of those Companions from whom a large number of exegetic narrations have been reported. In fact narrations are even more than Sayyidina 'Ali ﷺ Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Jarīr etc, have reported him saying as under:

والذی لا اله غیره ما نزلت اية من كتاب الله الا و انا اعلم فيمن نزلت و اين نزلت، ولو اعلم مكان احد اعلم بكتاب الله منى تناله المطايا لأتيه ـ

"By the Being save whom there is none worthy of worship, I know of every verse of the Book of Allah about whom it was revealed and where it was revealed. If I know the address of a person who knows the Book of Allah more than I know, I will certainly go to him provided the camels can reach that place."[96]

The famous Tābi'ī Masrūq bin Al-Ajda' states 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd used to recite a Surah before us and spend most of the day in its interpretation and relating Prophetic Traditions about it."[97]

And Masrūq has also said "I had been benefitted from many Companions, but after deep thinking found that the

95: Al-Itqān v2, p187.
96: Al-Itqān v2, p187.
97: Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr v1, p27.

knowledge of all the Companions was limited in six of them, namely, Sayyidina 'Umar, Sayyidina 'Ali, Sayydina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Sayyidina Zayd bin Thābit, Sayyidina Abu Darda and Sayydina Ubayy bin Ka'b رضی اللہ تعالی عنہم. Then I pondered again and found the knowledge of these six dependent on Sayydina 'Ali and Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷺ."[98]

## UBAYY BIN KA'B

He is also one of those Companions who were renowned in the science of Exegesis and Recital. The Prophet ﷺ had said about him.

اقرؤھم ابی بن کعبؓ

The greatest Recitor (among the Companions) is Ubayy bin Ka'b.[99]

His eminent status can be assessed from the fact that the great commentator Sayydina 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās took lessons from him. Sayydina Mu'ammar states.

عامة علم ابن عباس من ثلثة: عمرؓ و علیؓ و ابی بن کعبؓ

"Most of the learning of Ibn 'Abbās have been derived from 'Umar, 'Ali, and Ubbay bin Ka'b ﷺ."[100]

There are some reports that indicate that he was the first commentator whose exegesis was compiled in book form. There was a large transcription of his book from which Abu Ja'far Rāzi used to narrate from Rab'i bin Anas from Abī-Al-'Āliyah.' Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ḥākim have reported from this

98: Muqaddmah Nasbur-Rāyah, al-Kautharī v1, p30.
99: Tazkiratul Ḥuffaẓ Zahabī v1, p38.
100: Tazkiratul Ḥuffaẓ by Zahbi v1, p38.

transcription. Ḥākim had died in the year 405 AH., hence this transceiption was present upto the 5th century Hijri.[101]

In addition to the above mentioned Companions, narration related to exegesis of the Qurān have also been reported from Zayd bin Thābit, Mu'āz bin Jabal, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, Abdullah ibn Umar, Sayyidah 'Āyshah, Jābir Abu Mūsa Ash'arī, Anas and Abu Hurayrah رضی الله تعالی عنهم'.

101: Al-Itqān, v2, p189.

## AFTER THE COMPANIONS رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہم

The Companions رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہم of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had established centres at different places for the teaching of the Qurān. As a result of their teachings and training a large group of their followers were able to render prominent service to the Science of Exegesis. A brief introduction to some of them is given here, because they are frequently referred to in the books of exegesis.

### 1: MUJĀHID

His full name is 'Abul Ḥajjāj Mujāhid bin Jabr-al-Makhzūmī (Born 21 AH, Died 103 AH).[102] He was a student of 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and was his favourite pupil. He read the Qurān thirty times with him and learnt its exegesis three times. Qatādah said about him.'[103]

اعلم من بقی بالتفسیر مجاهد

Mujāhid is the greatest of the living of exegettes.

And Khaṣīf has said

اعلمهم بالتفسیر مجاهد ۔

"Mujāhid is the greatest scholar of exegesis."[104]

It is said that a collection of his exegesis is still safe in the Khadīviyah Library of Egypt.[105]

Although Mujāhid is among the Tabi'īn (followers of

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102: His father was Jabr or Jubayr. (Tahzībul-Asmā, Nawawī v2, p83).

103: Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb v10, p43.

104: Tazkirat-ul-Ḥuffāẓ by Zahabī, v1, p86.

105: Tārīkh-ul-Tafsīr by Abduṣ Ṣamad Ṣārim, p78, Delhi, AH.1355.

Companions) yet the Companions used to respect him. He has himself stated:

صحبت ابن عمر و انی ارید ان اخدمه فکان هو یخدمنی ۔

"I remained in the company of Ibn 'Umar and I wanted to serve him, but he used to serve me."[106]

Sayyidina Ibn 'Umar ﷺ once held the stirrup of his horse and said, "How I wish that my son Sālim and my slave Nāfe' had a memory like you."

He died in the year 103 AH while he was in prostration (Al-Bidāya wan-Nihayāh by Ibn Kathīr, V.9, P.224.)

## 2: SA'ĪD BIN JUBAYR

He is a renowned follower of Companions. He took lessons from 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Addullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin Zubayr, Anas, 'Abdullah bin Mughfal and Abu Mas'ūd al-Badri.[107]

He is known for his dedication and piety. Very frequently he used to weep during *Ṣalah* at night so much that it resulted in a weak vision.[108]

Ḥajjāj bin Yusuf martyred him in 94 A.H. which incident is well known in history of Islam. On the desire of caliph 'Abdul Mālik bin Marwān he had written an exegesis of the Qurān, which the caliph had kept in safe custody in the royal treasury. After a time this exegesis came into the hands of 'Aṭa' bin Dinār (Died 126 AH) who used to narrate from this exegesis as "Mursals"[109] from

106: Ḥilyat-ul-Auliyā by Abi Nu'aym v3, p285,286.
107: Tahzīb-ul-Asma' wal-Lughāt by Nūwī v1, p216.
108: Ḥilyat-ul-Auliyā, v4, p272.
109: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb: v7, p198, 199, about Aṭā bin Dinar. Mursal is a Saying of the Prophet where either the medium of companions is missing or narrators after the followers of Companions are missing.

Sa'īd bin Jubayr. Hence all the narrations of Sa'īd bin Jubayr quoted by 'Aṭā' bin Dinār are termed by the Traditionists as "*Wijādah*" and are not much reliable.

Many of Sa'id ibn Jurayr's narrations are Mursal (that is medium of Companion is missing). But his Mursal are reliable. Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd has said:

"I like Sa'īd bin Jubayr's *Mursals* more than those of 'Aṭā and Mujāhid."[110]

## 3: 'IKRIMAH

He is known by the name of 'Ikrimah Mawlā Ibn 'Abbās. He was a slave presented to Ibn 'Abbās as a gift by Ḥusayn bin Abi-al-Ḥar Al-'Ambarī. Ibn 'Abbās worked very hard to educate him and then freed him. Apart from Ibn 'Abbās he has reported narrations from Sayyidina 'Ali, Hasan bin 'Ali, Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, Abu Sa'īd Khuḍrī, 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, Jābir, Mu'āwiyah and some other Companions.[111]

'Ikrimah himself stated that he spent forty years in pursuit of knowledge.[112] Thus he travelled to Egypt, Syria, Iraq and even to Africa.[113] Imām Sha'bī had stated that in his time there was no scholar of the Qurān greater than 'Ikrimah.[114] Qatādah stated that four persons among the followers of Companions were the greatest scholars. 'Aṭa, Sa'īd bin Jubayr, 'Ikrimah and Ḥasan Baṣrī.[115]

## TRUTH ABOUT OBJECTIONS ON 'IKRIMAH

Some Traditionists have made certain objections on 'Ikrimah. The famous Orientalist Goldzi'her has tried to

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110: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb. p14, v4.
111: Tahzīb-ul-Tahzīb v7, p264.
112: Tazkirat-ul-Huffāẓ by Zahbi v1, p90.
113: Al-bidāyah wan-Nihāyah by Ibne Kathīr v9, p245.
114: Tahzīb-Tahzīb V7 p.266, and M Iftā hus Sa'ādah, v.1, p410.
115: Ibid.

blow out of proportion these objections and attempted to create an impression that even this renowned student of Ibn 'Abbās was not reliable in exegetic narrations.[116] But the fact is that scholars, after thorough scrutiny and research, have refuted these objections. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Hajar has made a vast and elaborate discussion on this subject in *Muqaddimah Fatḥ-ul-Bāri*. He has stated that several Tradtitionists have written books on the explanation of 'Ikrimah and have scrutinised objections raised against him. They include Ḥāfiz Ibn Jarīr, Imām Muḥammad bin Naṣr Maruzi, Abu 'Abdullah bin Mandah, Abu Ḥātim bin Ḥibbān and Abu 'Umar bin 'Abdul Barr.[117] Then Ibn Ḥajar has said that the objections being raised against 'Ikrimah depend on three allegations. Firstly, that he had attributed some wrong things to Ibn 'Abbās. Secondly, by his belief he was a Khārijī (Schismatic). And thirdly, he used to accept gifts and rewards from rich people.

As far as the third allegation is concerned that he accepted gifts and rewards from the rich people, it is not a valid reason for rejecting his reports. As for the other two, Ibn Ḥajar has concluded that these allegations could not be proved at all. Whatever incidents have been attributed to him have all been scrutinized and investigated one by one in full detail, and refuted with arguments by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar. For instance, the allegation of falsehood is based on a misunderstanding, that some times he heard a narration from two different persons, and on one occasion he quoted one of them and on another occasion he quoted the other person while reporting it. On this, some people thought that

116: Mazāhib ut Tafsīr ul Islami, Goldoziher, Arabic translation Dr Abdul Ḥalim an Najjar, p95.

117: Hadi as Sāri (Muqaddamah Fatḥ al Bāri, Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajr, v2, p192, Chaptar 9, letter 'Ain (ع).)

he used to invent *Ḥadith* although both narrations were correct. He himself has said:

ارأیت ھؤلاء الذین یکذبونی من خلفی، افلا یکذبونی فی وجھی۔

These people who falsify me in my absence why do they not falsify me on my face?

He meant to say that he would explain the fact if they talk to him face to face.

Similarly, Ibn Hajar showed that the allegation that he was a Khāriji could not be proved through any authentic source. However, in some juristic cases he had adopted the views which were similar to those of Khārijīs. It was due to this fact that some people alleged him to be a Khārijī.

Imām 'Ijlī says,

عکرمة مولٰی ابن عباس رضی اللّٰہ عنھما مکی تابعی ثقة بریٔ مما یرمیه به الناس به من الحروریة۔

" 'Ikaramah is the freed slave of Ibn 'Abbās, belongs to Makkah, and is a reliable follower of Companions. He is absolved of the allegations of being a Khāriji which people have brought against him."

And Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī has said,

"If a person, to whom a wrong belief has been attributed, could be declared unacceptable for testimony on this basis, we shall have to abandon most of the Traditionists because almost all of them are attributed things they did not like."[118]

That is why almost all the scholars of *Ḥadith*

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118: These sayings are reported by Ḥafiẓ Ibn Ḥajar. Details may be seen in Ḥadi as Sārī, v2, p192-196, Chapter 9.

(Traditionists) have cited narrations from 'Ikrimah. Imām Bukhāri is very strict in matters of scrutiny of Traditions and had dropped all doubtful reporters, yet he has adopted 'Ikrimah's reports in his Ṣaḥīḥ. About Imām Mālik it has been said that he did not like 'Ikrimah, but in the chapter Kitābul Ḥajj he has quoted 'Ikrimah's report.[119] It is also said about Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn that he used to taunt at 'Ikrimah, but Khālid al-Ḥazzā has stated as under:

> Every such tradition about which Muhammad bin Sīrīn says: 'نُبِّئتُ عن ابن عباس' (It is reported from Ibn 'Abbās) he had heard it 'Ikrimah. He did not name him because he personally disliked him".[120]

In short, it is a proved fact that 'Ikrimah's reports are acceptable and most scholars of *Ḥadith* have quoted him without any hesitation.

## GOLDZIHER'S CONFUSION

Here it seems appropriate to point to a confusion in the mind of Goldz'iher. He has narrated an incident that when 'Ikrimah died there were not enough people even to carry his coffin. On the other hand, a famous poet Kuthayyir 'Azzah also died the same day and in his burial a large group of Quraysh was present. Goldziher has inferred two things from this incident. One, that in those days Muslims in general had a greater regard for a public poet than for the Traditionists and two, that people of Arabia considered a slave (even though he was freed) to be far inferior to a pure Arab.[121]

But this imaginative expression of Goldziher is based on the malice and prejudice so he never felt ashamed of circulating unconfirmed reports. The fact is that the very

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119: Tārikh-ul-Kabīr by Bukhāri v4, p49 rele 218.
120: Al-bidāyah wan-Nihāyah v9, p245., and Hadl us Sāri, v2, p194.
121: Mazāhib ut Tafsīr il Islāmī, Goldziher, p95, 96.

story is baseless that there were many people in the funeral of Kuthayyir and almost none in the funral of 'Ikrimah. According to Ibn Hajar.

والذی نقل انهم شهدوا جنازة کثیّر و ترکوا عکرمة لم یثبت لان ناقلهٗ لم یسم ـ

"And the report that people participated in the bier of Kuthayyir and not of 'Ikrimah has not been proved because this has been narrated by an unknown person."[122]

And even if we accept the fact that very few people were present in the burial of 'Ikrimah, it is not surprising in view of the circumstances under which 'Ikrimah had died. In every historical narration it is mentioned that the government had issued orders for his arrest, due to which he had gone into hiding and died in that state. Obviously, very few people must have got the news of his death and hence the low attendance. No wise person can deduce from this that he enjoyed less respect in the eyes of the people than a poet. In the unbiased historical expressions it is explicitly mentioned that it was on the lips of people in general that:

مات أفقه الناس واشعر الناس ـ

Today the greatest jurist has died and also the greatest poet.[123]

Noteworthy is the ridiculous trend of research by the Orientalists that they are quick to infer on the basis of a minor unauthentic incident. The question arises: Was the bier of 'Ikrimah the only thing to test the respect of people

122: Tahzīb-ul-Tahzīb v7, p273.
123: Al-bidāyah wan-Nihāyah v9, p245.

for the Traditionists? Do the innumberable incidents of the lives and deaths of hundreds of thousands of other Traditionists throw no light on this subject? Is this the only incident in the history to determine the behaviour of general public with scholars of slave origin? Do they not get any guidance in this subject from the extreme popularlity and respect attained by thousands of slaves, other than 'Ikrimah, after their scholastic achievements? Did 'Ikrimah not get great respect when he was alive?

In fact, reference to such baseless allegations in a scholarly book is nauseating.[124]

Here we have mentioned them so that the low standard of research and the way of thinking of those people who remain busy to satisfy their passions of malice and prejudice, should also be known to our readers.

## 4: ṬA'WŪS رحمة الله عليه

His full name is 'Abdur Raḥmān Ṭa'wūs bin Kaisān al Himyari al Jundi. He belonged to the city of Jund in Yemen. He was also a slave. He attained his education from 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Zayd bin Thābit, Zayd bin Arqam and many other Companions. But his narrations reported from Sayyidah 'Āyshah رضى الله عنها and Mu'āz bin Jabal and the Caliphs are 'Mursal'. In his time he was famous for his piety and dedication to Allah apart from his scholastic and eminent status. He performed Ḥajj forty times. Imām Zuhrī has said, "If you had seen Ta'wūs you would have agreed that he canot tell a lie." 'Amr bin Dinār has said about him, "I have not seen a person more unconcerned about the property of others."[125]

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124: We will shortly see the report on the funeral of Ṭa'wūs and the lives of Traditionalists about many of whom were slaves originally.

125: Tahzīb ut-Tahzib, v5, p9-10.

'Allāmah Nawawī writes. "There is a consensus of all the scholars that he was highly honourable, venerated, full of dignity, excellence of knowledge, piety, power of memory and cautious approach."s[126] Ḥāfiz Abu Nu'aym Isfahāni has described his virtues and piety and his writings in great detail in *Ḥilyāt ul Awliya*. He died in Mina or Muzadlifah in the year 105 AH. And every class of people, from government officials to scholars and saints and the crowd participated in his funeral. The attendence was so large that the Caliph had to send the police to control it. Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin al Hasan bin 'Ali bin Abu Ṭālib kept his bier constantly on his shoulder even though his cap fell down and his shirt was torn.[127]

## 5: 'AṬĀ BIN ABI RABĀH

During the era of Tabi'īn (followers of companions) four dignitaries by the name of 'Aṭā had been very popular. They were 'Aṭā bin Abi Rabāḥ, Aṭā bin Yāsir, 'Aṭā bin al-Sā'ib and 'Aṭā al-Khurāsānī. The first two of these are unanimously regarded as "reliable" and there had been some comment on the other two. But whenever only 'Aṭā is written in religious books, it refers 'Aṭā bin Rabāh only. His full name is Abu Muḥammad 'Aṭā bin Abi Rabāh Al-Makkī Al-Qurayshī. He was the Maulā (Freed slave) of Ibn Khaysam al-Qurayshi. He was born in the last days of Caliphate of 'Uthmān and died in 114 A.H. He was educated by 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Abdullah bin Zubayr, and Sayyidah 'Āyshah رضی الله تعالی عنها and other Companions ﷺ and their followers. He was mainly popular as a jurist. It is said that in his time he was the greatest scholar on Ḥajj rites.[128] He was highly acclaimed

126: Tahzīb ul Asmā v1, p251.
127: Hilyat ul-AuLiyā, v4, p3.
128: Tahzīb ul-Asmā, v1, p333-334.

for his devotion to Allah and piety. Ibn Jurayj said, "For twenty years the floor of the mosque was his bed." Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah ad-Dibāj said, "I have not seen a Mufti (one authorized to pass a verdict on religious laws) better than 'Aṭā. His assembly was always enlightened with remembrance of Allah whose continuity was never broken. If a legal question was asked during it he used to give an exellent answer."[129]

However, his narrations lack authentication of a direct relay through the Companions. Even from Ibn-'Umar whom he has reported most frequently his direct audition is not proved. Similalry, he did not hear the narrations directly from Abu Sa'īd Khuḍrī, Zayd bin Khālid, Umm Salmah, Umm Hāni, Umm Kurz, Rāfi' bin Khadīj, Usāmah, Jubayr bin Muṭ'am Abu Dardā and Faḍal bin 'Abbās.' Hence his direct narrations from all these people are "*Mursal*" (without direct audition from a Companion). Imām Ahmad considered his Mursal as the weakest of all Mursal because he used to accept narration from everyone and anyone.[130]

## 6: SA'ĪD BIN AL-MUSAYYIB

His full name was Sayyidina Sa'īd bin Al-Musayyib bin Ḥazn al-Qarshī al-Makhzūmī.[131]

He was the son-in-law of Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah ﷺ. Hence many of Abu Hurayrah's narrations have been reported from him. He was such a pious and devoted person that for forty years there was no 'call for Ṣalāh' which he did not hear while he was already present in the

129: Tazkiratul Huffāẓ by Zahabī v1, p92.

130: Tahẕīb-al-Tahẕīb, v7, pp202-203.

131: It is both Musayyab and Musayyib (with a and i) the former is more used but he himself preferred with an 'i' because that was the custom in Madinah. (Tahzīb ul-Asma, Nawawi.) v1, p219.

mosque.[132] and performed Hajj forty times. He never accepted any reward from any rich person. For his livelihood he depended on his trade of oils. Imām Mālik has quoted him as saying. "Some times I used to travel several days and nights just to learn a single Tradition."[133] He was born in the third year of Sayyidina 'Umar's caliphate. Hence he has heard traditions from many Companions. He used to report too often indirectly (as Mursal) from the Companions whom he did not hear directly. But his Mursal were accepted even by those 'ulamā who normally rejected Mursal *Ahādith*. For example, Imām Shāfa'ī did not consider Mursal valid for reporting but he said, "Ibn Musaiyyib's Mursal narrations are fairly authentic for us." The reason is that he always reported from reliable narrators only.[134]

But Imām Nawawī has refuted that his Mursal were acceptable to Shafa'ī without preconditions. He says "For us his Mursal are subject to the same conditions as those of other eminent Tabi'ī that is, it would be accepted only if it is supported by a proven narration or another Mursal or by the sayings of some Companions or after the Companions by the deliberations of most of the jurists", otherwise, no."[135] This discussion is, however, related to Shafa'ī School of thought. For Hanafīs his mursal are acceptable without pre conditions. There are different reports about his death from 91 AH to 105 AH.

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132: Tahzībul-Asmā, v4, p87.
133: Tazkiratul Huffāz, v1, p51-52.
134: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v4, p85-87.
135: Tahzīb ul Asmā v1, p221. Muqaddama Al-Majmū' Sharaḥ al-Muhazzab v, p100 Cairo.

## 7: MUHAMMAD BIN SĪRĪN

His full name is Abu Bakr Muḥammad bin Sīrīn. His father Sīrīn was the freed slave of Sayyidina Anas ﷺ and his mother Ṣafya was the freed maid of Sayyidina Abu Bakr Ṣiddīq ﷺ. At the time when Sayyidina Abu Bakar ﷺ purchased her, three of the respected wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ applied fragrance to her, and eighteen of the Companions of Badr joined the celeberation. They included Ubayy bin Ka'b who made the Supplication to Allah and the others said Āmīn. Among the children of Sayyidina Sīrīn six are well known. They are Muḥammad, Ma'bad, Anas, Yahya. Ḥafṣah and Karīmah. All six of them are reliable reporters of *Ḥadith*. Of them the most popular and eminently placed is Muḥammad bin Sīrīn whose wonderful life needs to be recorded in book form. His piety and dedication is exemplary. Hishām bin Ḥasān said, "When we stayed in the house of Ibn Sīrīn we heard him laughing during daytime (because he had a jolly and delightful nature), and weeping at night." It was due to his piety and dedication that he had to bear the hardships as a prisoner. During his imprisonment the jail warden offered him permission to go home at night and come back in the morning every day. But he replied, "By God! I shall not aid in being mistrustful to the Sultan."[136]

It was during his imprisonment that the renowned Companion and his father's master Sayyidina Anas ﷺ died. He had left a will that his body should be given bath by Muḥammad bin Sīrīn. People came to him and mentioned the will, he said, "I am a prisoner." People said, "We have obtained permission from the Sulṭan." Muḥammad bin Sīrīn replied, "The one who imprisoned

136: The material so far is collected from Tahzīb ul-Asmā wal Lughāt v1. pp83,84.

me is not the Sultan but the man whose right I have to pay." So the people got permission of that man, and then Muḥammad bin Sīrīn gave bath to Sayyidina Anas ﷺ.[137]

Anyhow, Muḥammad bin Sīrīn is unanimously accepted as Imām of exegesis, traditions and law. He is known to have met Sayyidina Anas, Abu Hurayrah 'Imrān bin Husayn, 'Abdullah bin 'amr and Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ. He has also reported as indirect narration (i.e. Mursal) from those Companions whom he never met. But his Mursal are accepted by many of those who do not otherwise rely on Mursal as an argument, for instance Imām Ibn Taymiyyah says,

و محمد بن سیرین من اورع الناس فی منطقه مراسیلة من اصح المراسیل ۔

"Muḥammad bin Sīrīn is the most cautions of persons in his discourses and his Mursal are the most reliable of all Mursal."[138]

He died in Baṣrah on 9 Shawwāl 110 AH.[139]

## 8: ZAYD BIN ASLAM

His full name is Abu 'Abdullah Zayd bin Aslam Al-'Amrī (D.136 AH) He belonged to Madina and was a freed slave of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar رضی اللہ تعالی عنہ. He has reported narrations from Ibn 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Sayyidina 'Āyshah, Jabir, Anas and Salamah bin Al-Akwa' etc., رضی اللہ تعالی عنہم. He was a great scholar in the science of exegesis and is unanimously regarded as reliable. He conducted teachings in the Masjid Nabawi. He was so

137: Ḥilyat ul Awliya, Abi Nu'im, v2, p267.
138: Minhāj us Sunnah, v3, p86.
139: Tahdhīb ut Tahdhīb v9, p216.

popular that his son 'Abd-ur-Rahmān stated that whenever his father sent him to any of his students, he used to kiss him on his forehead and say, "By God! your father is dearer to us than our entire family. If we are told that any of our family or Zayd bin Aslam would die and if we are given a choice to, we shall wish that Zayd bin Aslam should live."[140]

Abu Ḥāzim said, "We attended the assemblies of Zayd bin Aslam with forty jurists. Our humblest disposition was that we used to offer solace to each other with our possessions, and in his assemblies never saw two persons arguing on useless topic or disputing with each other."[141]

Sayyidina Zayd bin Aslam has been generally accepted as reliable. However, 'Ubaydullah bin 'Umar says,' "I do not know of anything bad in him. However, he used to interpret the Qurān very often on his own views." And Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah said. " Zayd bin Aslam was a noble man but his memory was a bit defective." Apart from these two persons, no one else has passed adverse comments on him.

Hafiẓ Zahabī states that there was an exegesis written by him which his son 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Zayd bin Aslam used to quote.[142] But it should be understood that 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Zayd bin Aslam is a weak narrator despite his piety and devotion, and most of the Traditionists have called him "unreliable"[143] Hence the exegetic narrations of Zayd bin Aslam reported by his son 'Abdur Raḥman are not fully reliable.

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140: Tahzīb-ul-Tahzīb v3, pp395, 396.
141: Ibid, v1, p200.
142: Tazkirat-ul-Ḥuffāẓ v1, p125.
143: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, p178, 179.

## 9: ABUL 'ĀLIYAH'

His full name is Abul 'Āliyah Rufai' bin Mehrān Ar-Riyaḥī. He belonged to Baṣrah and was born in the days of paganism but embraced Islam two years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. He had met Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ, and he has reported *Aḥādith* from Sayyidina 'Alī, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy bin Ka'b, Ibn 'Abbās, Abu Mūsa, Abu Ayyūb and Abū Barzah رضی الله تعالی عنهم. He was a renowned Qāri (Recitor) of the Qurān. He was also a freed slave of a woman of Banī Rabāḥ,[144] but Sayyidina Ibn 'Abbās always offered him a seat by his side on the cot while other Quraysh sat on the floor, and would say, "knowledge upholds the nobility of man in this manner."[145] There is a consensus of scholars on his reliability. He died in 93 AH.[146] He was the first one to make the call for *Ṣalah* in the region of Māwarā un-nahr;[147] (the area beyond the river).

## 10: 'URWAH BIN AZ-ZUBAYR

He was the son of Sayyidina Zubayr bin 'Awwām رضی اللہ عنہ. He is one of the seven renowned jurists of Al-Madinah, and a nephew of Sayyidah 'Āyshah رضی الله تعالی عنها. That is why he has reported many traditions from her, and has been considered most reliable in reporting them. It is agreed by the 'Ulamā that he was dignified, knowledgeable, learned and reliable.[148] His son Hishām has said, "My father always observed fasts and died in the same state in 94 AH".

Ibn Shawzab stated that 'Urwah used to recite one

144: Tahzīb-ul-Asmā v2, p251.
145: Tazkiratul Ḥuffāẓ v1, p58.
146: Tahzīb-ul-Tahzīb v3, p284.
147: Ḥilyatul Awliyā v2, p221.
148: Tahzīb-ul-Asmā, pp331, 332.

fourth of the Qurān every day and also in the late night *Salāh* (Tahajjud). This practice was discontinued only once in his life on the night when his leg was amputated due to a disease.[149]

## 11: ḤASAN BAṢRĪ

His full name is Abu Sa'īd Al-Ḥasan bin Abi al-Ḥasan Yasār Al-Baṣrī. He was the freed slave of Zayd bin Thābit ﷺ (and according to some people of Jamil bin Qutaibah.) His mother Khayrah was the freed slave-woman of the Prophet's ﷺ wife Umm Salmah رضی الله تعالی عنها and was therefore, sometimes breastfed by her. He was born two years before the martyrdom of Sayyidina 'Umar ﷺ. He had met many Companions nd also gained religious knowledge from them. His eminent status with regard to learning and piety is unquestionable. His devotion and dedication, and his prudent sayings and writings are very popular. At the same time as that he was a great warrior too, and took part in several battles.[150] During the reign of Sayydina Mu'āwiyah he had remained the scribe for the governor of Khurasān, Rabi' bin Ziyād.

He has narrated many Traditions as Mursal (that is, he has not mentioned the link of the Companion whose Traditions he narrated). There has been a severe difference of opinion among scholars of *Ḥadith* on the question of the reliability of such *Aḥādith* so that some accept them while others reject them. Imām Ibn ul-Madīni has said, "If the Mursals of Ḥasan are reported from reliable narrators then they are true and they are very rarely unreliable." Imām Abu Zar'ah said, "All those traditions, which Ḥasan Baṣri has reported with the words

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149: Tazkirat-ul-Ḥuffāẓ, v1, p59.
150: Tahzīb ul-Asma, v1, p161 refe 122.

'The Messenger of Allah said...' but without naming the line of transmission, I have found them correct after scrutiny, except for four of them where I could not trace the Companion's link." Imām Aḥmad has however termed the Mursal of Ḥasan Baṣrī and 'Atā as the weakest of all Mursal.[151] He died in 110 AH.

## 12: QATĀDAH

His full name is Abul Khaṭṭāb Qatādah bin Di'āmah As-Sudūsī Al-Baṣrī. He was born blind, yet his memory was so sharp that he himself had said, "I never asked a Traditionist to report a Tradition a second time, and my ears never heard a thing which my heart did not memorise." He also said, "There is no verse of the Qurān about which I had not learnt something (that is, a narration or report) already." Imām Aḥmad said, "Qatādah is a great scholar of exegesis." In addition, he also had a great knowledge of the Arabic language, literature, history and geneology. However, the Traditionists have said that sometimes he adopted '*Tadlīs*'[152] in the narrations. He died of plague in the city of Wāsiṭ in 118 AH.[153]

## 13: MUḤAMMAD BIN KA'B AL-QURAẒĪ

His full name is Muḥammad bin Ka'b bin Saleem bin Asad Al-Quraẓi. His Kunyah is Abu Hamzah or Abu 'Abdullah.' His father belonged to the tribe of Banu Qurayẓah and was excused in the battle of Banu Qurayzah due to his childhood. It is said that Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Quraẓī was born in the life time of Prophet ﷺ. He has

151: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, V.3, P.202 about Aṭā bin Abi Rabāḥ Ibn al Madīnī and Abu Zar'ah and v2, pp266-270.

152: A missing link occurring where a narrator heard a Hadith from his teacher when the teacher of his teacher was also his contemporary.

153: Adapted from Tazkirat-ul-Huffāz, pp115, 117 refe. 12.

reported several traditions from Sayyidina 'Alī, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Jābir, Anas, Barā bin 'Āzib, Mu'āwiyah, Ka'b bin 'Ujrah, Zayd bin Arqam, Mughīra bin Shu'bah 'Abdullah bin Jā'far and several other Companions رضى الله تعالى عنهم.

Imām Ibn Sa'd said, "He was reliable and a scholar of many traditions." Imām 'Ijlī said, "He is reliable and pious and a great scholar of the Qurān." 'Aun bin 'Abdullah stated, "I have not seen a scholar of exegesis of the Qurān greater than him."[154] 'Allāmah Nawawī said, "There is consensus on his reliablilty.

In the beginning he had settled in Kūfah (Irāq) but later on returned to Madinah. He died somewhere between 108 and 120 AH.[155]

## 14: 'ALQAMAH

His full name is Abu Shubayl 'Alqamah bin Qays bin 'Abdullah Nakh'ī. He was resident of Kūfah (Īrāq) and was born during the life time of the Prophet ﷺ. He has reported traditions from many Companions but he was a favourite student of Sayyidina Abdullah bin Mas'ūd ﷛, so much so that he had a great resemblance in appearance and character with Ibn Mas'ūd. Hence in the matter of narrations of Ibn Mas'ūd great reliance is placed on him and Sayyidina Aswad. He was a sweet voiced recitor of the Qurān and Sayyidina Ibn Mas'ūd used to send for him specially for hearing his recitals of the Qurān. Once he recited the entire Qurān in one night. He is unanimously regarded as reliable and had attained a highly eminent place in the science of jurisprudence. About his death there are different reports that he died between 62 AH and 73 AH.[156]

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154: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v9, p420-422.
155: Tahzīb-ul-Asmā, v1, p90.
156: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb v7, p278.

He was a very humble person and generally remained busy in household tasks. He did not like to have his own circle of students and used to say, "I do not like that people walk after me and say to each other that he is Alqamah. After his death his enire heritage was a copy of the Holy Qurān and a horse in addition to a house."[157]

## 15: ASWAD

His full name is Abu 'Amr Aswad bin Yazīd bin Qays Al Nakh'ī. He also belonged to Kūfah ('Irāq) and was also a favourite student of 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd, a nephew of 'Alqamah and maternal uncle of Ibrāhīm Nakh'ī. 'Allāmah Nawawī states, "There is consensus on his reliability and eminent status." He was renowned for his piety and devotion. It is said that he travelled to the Ḥarmayn[158] eighty times for Hajj or 'Umrah. His son 'Abdur Raḥmān used to offer 700 raka'āt in *Ṣalāh* every day, yet it was said that he was the weakest worshipper among the family members of Sayyidina Aswad.[159]

Sayyidina Ibrāhīm Nakh'ī stated, "Aswad used to recite complete Qurān in two nights of Ramaḍān and slept only between Maghrib and 'Ishā. He kept so many fasts that his body used to turn pale and purple. When 'Alqamah said to him why did he put so much hardship to his body, he would say, "I want the comfort of the Hereafter for the body." And sometimes he said, "O Abu Shabl, the affair (of Hereafter) is very serious." He died about 75A.H.[160]

157: Hilyat ul Awliyā, Abi Nu'aym v2, p100.
158: The two 'Harams, Mosque Al-Ḥaram of Ka'bah and Mosque Al-Nabawi at Madinah.
159: Tazkiratul Huffāẓ, v1 p48. Tahzīb ul Asmā v1, p122.
160: Ḥilyatul Awliyā. v2, pp103-104, ref 165.

## 16: MURRAH AL-HAMDĀNĪ

His full name is Abu Ismā'īl Murrah bin Sharāhīl. Al-Hamdānī Sakaski Al-Kūfi, and in his time he was known by the titles of "Murratut-Ṭayyib" (Murrah, the Pure) and "Murrat-ul-Khayr" (Murrah the Good). He saw the times of Prophet ﷺ but could not see him and is thus known as one of the *Mukhḍarmīn*[161] He has reported from many Companions, for example, Sayyidina 'Umar 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Huzayfah and Abū Zarr etc. He received much knowledge from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. Thus we find a large number of Ibn Mas'ud's narrations reported by him in the books of exegesis. He is unanimously considered as reliable. His devotion in worship of Allāh was so extreme that historians write, "The number of his prostrations were so many that earth had eaten his forehead." He is said to offer between five to six hundred raka'āt daily.[162] Ḥāfiẓ Zahabī has written "He had an insight in exegesis." He died about 90 AH.[163]

But it should be remembered that his narrations in the books of exegesis are immensely reported by Suddī who is reported weak as we shall soon see.

## 17: NĀFI'

His full name is Abū 'Abdullah Nāfi' bin Hurmuz and according to some Nāfi' bin Kāūs. He belonged to Nishapur and was a freed slave of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar رضي الله عنه. He was an eminent follower of Companions (Tābi'ī). He gained most of his knowledge from Sayyidina Ibn 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Abu Sa'id Khuḍrī, Abu Lubābah,

161: One who lived in the times of the Holy Prophet ﷺ but did not see him.

162: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v1, p88. (or v10)

163: Tazkirat ul-Ḥuffāẓ, v1, p63.

Rāfi' bin Khadīj ﷺ and Sayyidah 'Āyshah رضی الله تعالی عنها.
Of all the students of Sayyidina Ibn 'Umar, two have been regarded as most reliable, his son Sālim bin 'Abdullah and his slave Nāfi'. 'Allāmah Nawāwi stated that there was consensus on the eminence of his status and reliability. And according to Imām Bukhāri, "Of all the reports, the most correct report is in the sequence Mālik from Nāfi' from Ibn 'Umar.[164] Sayyidina Ibn 'Umar himself has said, "Allah has granted us a great favour through Nāfi'." Ibn Hajar has written, "No error could be detected in all the Traditions reported by him".[165]

Imām Mālik who was his favourite student says about him that he was a very humble person, generally wrapped himself in a black sheet and talked very little. Sayyidina Nāf'i himself said, "I served Ibn 'Umar for 30 years. After that Ibn 'Āmir asked him to sell me to him for 30,000 dirhams. Then Ibn 'Umar said to me that he feared the dirhams of Ibn 'Āmir might not put him into a serious trial, therefore, you are free from now." He died in 117 A.H.[166]

## 18: SHA'BĪ

His full name is Abu 'Āmir bin Sharāḥīl Ash-Sha'bī Al Ḥimyari. He is one of the famous jurists from the Tābi'i of Kūfah ('Irāq). He had met about five hundred Companions. His memory was extra-ordinarily strong. He never memorized a *Ḥadith* by first writing it down. He used to say "Whenever any one recites anything to me it is at once committed to my memory. The thing that I remember least is poetry, yet if I start reciting poetical verses I can do it for a whole month and no verse will be repeated." He is one of the eminent teachers of Imām Abu Ḥanīfah, and his

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164: Tahdhīb-ul-Asma, v2, pp123-124, refe 187.
165: Tahdhīb-ut-Tahdhīb, v10, p413-415.
166: Tadhkirat-ul-Ḥuffāẓ, v1, p94.

own eminent status is universally accepted. Imām Aḥmad and Imām 'Ijlī have stated that even his Mursal are reliable because he reported as Mursal only the correct narrations.[167]

## 19: IBN ABI MULAYKAH

His full name is Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah bin 'Ubaydullah bin Abi Mulaykah Al-Tamīmī Al-Makkī. During the caliphate of Abdullah bin Zubayr he was the chief judge (Qāzī) of Makkah and the Muazzin (who calls to prayer) in the Mosque Al-Haram. Afterwards Ibn Zubayr appointed him the Qāzī of Ṭa'if. He has reported Traditions from many Companions, and according to him, he had met thirty Companions.[168]

During his stay at Ṭa'if he also benefitted from the knowledge of Ibn 'Abbās. According to Ḥāfiẓ Zahabī "كان اماما فقيها حجة فصيحا مفوها متفقا على ثقته".

There was consensus on his reliability. He died in 117 A.H.[169]

## 20: IBN JURAYJ

His full name is Abul Walīd 'Abdul Malik bin 'Abdul 'Azīz bin Jurayj Al-Qurayshi Al-Makkī. His time was among the successors of the followers of Companions.' He had been a student of Ṭā'ūs 'Aṭā' bin Abi Rabāḥ, Mujāhid, Ibn Mulaykah and Nāfi' etc. In particular he lived with Sayyidina 'Aṭā' for 17 years. When people asked 'Aṭā' whom should they approach for religious matters after his death, he pointed to Ibn Jurayj and said, "Ask from him if he be alive." That is why he has been called الثبت (most reliable of all the people) for the

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167: Ibid, v1, pp74-82.

168: Tahzīb al Tahzīb v5, p307.

169: Tazkirat-ul-Huffāẓ, v1, pp95-96.

narrations of 'Aṭā.' His special trait is that he was the first regular writer of religious sciences who compiled the various sciences for the first time. He has said, ما دون العلم تدويني احد . "No one compiled religious doctrines as I did", he was in a very high esteem in the matter of dedication and devotion. He used to keep fasts daily except for three days in a month.[170] Imām 'Abdur Razzāq says, "Whenever I see Ibn Jurayj offering Ṣalāh, I feel certain that his heart is filled with the fear of Allah."[171]

Most Traditionists have considered him reliable. However, some scholars have also expressed minor doubts and raised small objections against him. For instance, Imām Mālik has said, "Ibn Jurayj is *Ḥāṭib-ul-layl*", that is, he accepts all sorts of narrations, right or wrong. Yaḥyā bin Mu'īn states that he is unreliable in the matter of Zuhri's narrations, because he sometimes used to cite weak reporters. Hence, scholars of *Ḥadith* have established that his narrations which begin with the prefix of حدثني (I heard the *Ḥadith* or) عن (from) are doubtful. But on the whole he is a reliable reporter, hence a large number of his narrations are quoted in the six correct books of *Ḥadith*.[172]

## 21: ḌAḤḤĀK

His full name is Abu Qasim Ḍaḥḥāk bin Muzāḥim al Hilāli. He belonged to Khurāsān. Ḍaḥḥāk means the one who laughs much and he was so named because he remained in his mother's womb for two years and had already grown his teeth when he was born and he was laughing.[173] He was born during the times of the Companions but his reports

170: Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb, v6, p403-406.
171: Tahzīb-ul-Asmā, v2, p297.
172: Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb, v6, Pp403-406.
173: Miftāḥ us Sa'ādah, v1, p404. Al-Bidāyah wan Nihāyah, Ibn Kathīr, v9, p223.

directly from any Companion are doubtful. Even his reports from Ibn 'Abbās are 'Mursal'. 'Abdul Mālik bin Maisarah states, "Ḍaḥḥāk never met Ibn 'Abbās. However, he had met Sa'īd bin Jubayr at Rey, and he studied exegesis of the Qurān form Sayyidina Sa'īd".[174]

Most scholars have regarded him as reliable. Only Shu'bah and Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān have called him as weak. But firstly, these two are known to be more strict in their scrutiny of people[175], and secondly their scrutiny was perhaps aimed at establishing that he never met any Companion yet he used to report directly from them. But by himself he was reliable. Ḥāfiẓ Zahabī has said about him,

وثقه احمد وابن معين و ابو زرعه وغيرهم وضعفه يحيى القطان
وشعبة ايضاً ، وهو قوىّ فى التفسير (المغنى فى الضعفاء للذهبى، ص٣١٢، ج١)

That is Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Mu'īn and Abu Zur'ah have called him 'Reliable' and Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān and Shu'bah have said that he was weak and he was strong in Tafsīr.[176]

Ibn Hajar has written

"صدوق كثير الارسال"

"He is truthful but reports from Mursal too often."

The narrations of Ibn 'Abbās as reported by him[177] have been considered 'weak' by Traditionsists as we have already stated. However, his own exegesis is acceptable. He died sometime between 103 And 106 AH.

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174: Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb, v4, p453.

175. al-'Ajwibah-tul-Fāḍila, Mawlāna Abdul Hayy Lakhnavi, Pp161-180, Syria.

176. al Mughnī fid Ḍ'uafā, Zahabī, v1, p312, refer. 2912.

177. Taqrīb-ut-Tahzīb, v1, p273, Madinah.

# WEAK OR DISPUTED COMMENTATORS OF EARLY ERA

The above mentioned personalities are those about whose reliability there is a near consensus, and they are frequently refered to in the reports and narrations of exegesis. Apart from them, we have talked in detail about Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, Wahb bin Munabbih and Ka'b ul-Aḥbār when discussing "Isra'īliyyāt." We now present a brief introduction of some of those commentators of the times of Tābi'īn (Followers of Companions) or Taba' Tabi'īn (Followers of Tabi'īn) who are considered either as "weak" or there is a significant difference of opinion about their reliability.

## SUDDĪ

In the books of exegesis two persons are well-known by the name of Suddī. Separate description of both of them will be more appropriate:

### 1. THE SENIOR

Abu Muhammad Ismā'īl bin 'Abdur Rahmān bin Abī Karīmah-Suddi al-Kūfi (died 127 AH). He is known as As-Suddī-al-Kabīr and if the books of exegesis re-fer only to "Suddī,", the reference is to him. He was called "Suddī", because he used to sell sheets on the platform by the door of Grand-mosque of Kūfah. In Arabic language such platform outside the door is called 'Suddah'. Hence he was called Suddī.

He had a special aptitude for the exegesis of the Qur'ān, hence the books of exegesis are full of his sayings and narrations. How much reliable he is in the matter of science

of exegesis and reporting is disupted by the scholars. Some of them have supported him. For instance Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān says,

لاباس به ما سمعت احد' یذکره الا بخیر

"There is no harm in his narrations. Whomsoever I heard talking about him it was nothing but good."[178]

Imām Aḥmad said. "He is reliable." Imām Ibn 'Adi says, "In my view he is right and truthful about *Ḥadith*. There is no harm in him." Imām 'Ijlī said, "He is a reliable scholar and reporter for exegesis." Imām Nasā'ī called him "Righteous."[179] Imām Bukhāri also appears to consider him reliable because he has not reported any comments against him in his *Tārīkh Kabīr* but he has quoted Isma'īl bin Abi Khālid as saying that Suddi was a greater scholar of the Qurān than Sha'bi and he has also quoted Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd al Qaṭṭān as above saying. After the two quotations he has made no adverse comment.[180] Imām Muslim also took him as reliable and has quoted him in his Ṣaḥiḥ.

On the other hand, many other scholars have commented on him. For instance, somebody said to Imām Sha'bī, "Suddī has a major share of knowledge of the Qurān." In reply to this Sha'bī said, "He has received the major share of being ignorant of the Qurān." Yaḥyā bin Mu'īn called him weak. Imām Abu Zar'ah called him Lenient which is a minor degree of relilablity. Imām Abu Ḥātim said, "His narrations may be written but should not

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178. We have reproduced the translation of the sayings nearer to the meanings for our readers to understand easily. The technical words can be understood by Scholars of Ḥadith only.

179: Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb, v1, pp313-314.

180. at-Tārikh-al-Kabīr, v1, p361, Syria.

be regarded as conclusive." Sājjī said, "He is truthful but should be ignored". Imām 'Uqaylī states, "He is weak and is aggressive against Abu Bakr and 'Umar." Imām Ṭabarī stated that inferences from his narrations are not desirable. Imām Jauzjānī said, "He is truthful but should be ignored. He is a liar and abusive."[181]

Imām Fallās has quoted 'Abdur Rahmān bin Mahdī as saying, "He is weak." And Ḥusain bin Wāfid Al-Marūzī states, "I have heard the narrations from Suddī, and I left him when I heard he was using offensive language against Abu Bakr and 'Umar ﷺ, and I never went to him again."[182]

Considering all this discussion Ibn Hajar has concluded that, "He is truthful but confused in reporting and is also blamed for being a *Shīá* ."[183]

His wordings are, The word صدوق is spoken for a person who is not a liar but his memory is also not upto the standard. Hence his correct position is that in respect of memory he does not come upto the standard of Traditionists, and he is also blamed to be a Shīá . Only Imām Jauzjānī has called him a liar.

## 2. THE JUNIOR

The other person known by the name of Suddī is Muhammad bin Marwān As-Suddī who was the freed slave of 'Abdur Rahmān bin Zayd bin Khaṭṭāb ﷺ.[184]

His narrations number fewer than those of Suddī Kabīr. In order to distinguish him from Suddī kabīr he is called as Suddī as-Saghīr. He also belonged to Kūfah (Iraq) and is

181. Tahzīb-ut-Tahzīb, v1, p313-314.
182. Mizān-ul-I'tidāl, Zahabī, pp236, 237. refe 907.
183: Taqrīb ut Tahzīb, v1, p72.
184: Tārīkh Baghdād, al-Khaṭīb, v3, p291.

unanimously considered as "weak". He was the student of renowned historian Kalbī (whose life we will see shortly). Imām Bukhārī has stated that his narrations should never be quoted. Imām Ibn Mu'īn said, "He is not reliable." Imām Aḥmad says, "I met him when he was too old, hence I left him." Zahabī said, "Traditionists have blamed him as a liar."[185] At another place he wrote, "He is an extremely exaggerating narrator."[186] Imām Nasa'ī states, "He is rejected for narration,"[187] Abu 'Ali Ṣāliḥ bin Muḥammad said, "He was weak and also he invented Tradition.[188]

Earlier, we have stated when dealing with the transcript with Ibn 'Abbās of *Tanvīr-ul-Miqyās-fi-Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās* is reported by Suddī Saghīr and 'Allāmah Suyūtī has called its report as a "chain of falsehood", and hence it is not reliable.[189]

## MUQĀTIL

Again, there are two persons known by this name. One is Abu Bisṭam Muqātil bin Ḥaiyyān, and the other is 'Abul Ḥasan Muqātil bin Sulaymān. Both belonged to the same town Balkh, to the same time and both reported from the same kind of teachers. Hence sometimes a confusion arises between the two. Of these, the former (Muqātil bin Ḥaiyyān) is considered reliable because of his sound opinion, and is an eminent scholar, but his references in the books of exegesis are very few. If Books of exegesis refer only to Muqātil it means the other Muqātil bin Sulaymān because he is the one known as a commentator, and his

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185: Mizān-ul-I'tidāl, v4, pp32-33. Al-Mughnī Fiḍ Ḍu'fā, v2, p631.
186: Ibid, v1, p237. (refer Isma'il bin Abdur Rahmān As-Siddī al-Kabīr.
187: Kitāb ud ḍuafā wal Matrūkīn Nasa'i Tārīkh-as-Saghīr al-Bukhārī, p303.
188: Tarikh Baghdad Al-Khaṭīb, v3, p292, Beirut.
189: Al-Itqān, V2, p189.

sayings and opinions are mostly found in the books of exegesis. Hence, we will speak of him in some detail.

Muqātil bin Sulaymān (died 150 AH) had written an exegesis, references which are made frequently in the books of exegesis. Some scholars have praised him but most of them have regarded him as unreliable. Among those who praise are Imām Shafa'ī who said, "People are dependant on Muqātil for exegesis". And Baqiyyah said, "Shu'bah was frequently asked about Muqātil. I always found him speaking good of Muqātil." And Muqātil bin Ḥaiyyān used to call him the 'Ocean of knowledge.'

But leaving aside these few words of praise, most of the Traditionists have bitterly argued against and criticised him. The first objection is that he used to report unfounded narrations. Wakī' says, "We intended to visit Muqātil, but he himself arrived in our town. We met him but found him to be a liar, hence we did not write anything from him." Imām Jauzjānī says about him, "He is an obstinate liar." Imām Ibn Mu'īn said, "He is not reliable." And, "He is nothing." 'Amr bin 'Ali (Fallās) said, "Rejected for narration and liar." Imām Ibn Sa'īd states, "The traditionists kept away from him and called him one rejected." 'Abdur Rahmān bin Ḥākam says, "He was a story-teller and people have given up his narrations."Abu Ḥātim and 'Ijlī called him as rejected for *Ḥadith* Imām Nasā'ī called him a liar and on another occasion he said, "Four persons are very well-known for inventing false traditions and attributing them to the Prophet ﷺ, and one of them is Muqātil." Imām Dārquṭnī writes, "He lies." Imām Ḥākim said, "He is not reliable in the eyes of scholars." 'Abduṣ Ṣamad bin 'Abdul Wārith has written, "Muqātil came to us and narrated some traditions claimed to be derived from 'Aṭā.' then he narrated the same through Ḍaḥḥāk, and then through

'Amr bin Shu'ayb. We asked him from whom he had heard those traditions? He said that he heard them from all of them, but soon he said that he did not remember from whom he heard them[190]. Imām Bukhārī has written, "He is nothng at all".[191] 'Abdullah bin Mubārak praised his devotion but did not accept his narrations.[192]

The other objection against him is that he belonged to the *Mujassimah* sect (that is, they used to liken the attributes of Allah to those of His creations, and also believed Him having bodily organs etc). 'Abbās bin Muṣ'ab Marouzī says, "Muqātil bin Sulayman was originally from Balkh, then he came to Maru, and here he started story-telling in the grand mosque of the town. It was here that debates took place between him and Jahm bin Ṣafwān (the founder of *Jahmia* sect). Hence they wrote books against each other." And Imām Abu Ḥanīfah says, "Two foul views have penetrated among us from Eastern side, one is the view of Jahm who was among the *Mu'aṭṭalah*,[193] and the other was Muqātil's view which was based on allegories. Jahm exaggerated in negating the attributes of Allah until he made Him non-existent. And Muqātil exaggerated in positiveness of attributes so he made Him similar to His creation.[194]

Hāfiẓ Shamsuddin Zahbī has categorised him among the weak narrators and stated Muqātil bin Sulayman Balkhī is in a very poor condition. Waki' and Nasā'ī also call him a liar.[195]

Ibn Hajar has concluded that:

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190: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v10, pp282-285.
191: at-Tarīkh al-kabīr, v4, p14 (part 2) refer 1976.
192: Miftāh us-Sa'ādah, Kübra Zadah, v1, p404.
193: The group of people who believe that Allah has material body like human beings.
194: Tahzīb al Tahzīb, refer as above.
195: Al-Mughni fi Aḍ-ḍu'afā, Zahabī, v2, p675.

كذبوه وهجروه ورمى بالتجسم

the scholars have called him a liar and gave up his narrations and he is also blamed for belonging to *Mujassimah* sect.[196]

Despite such harsh critictism and arguments against him, his sayings are too frequently mentioned in the books of exegesis. The reason is that although he was not reliable in reporting the traditions yet he was a well-informed person, and because his greatest pre-occupation in life was exegesis and he had gathered information from different methods, some useful things are found in his exegesis. That is why the commentators have spoken of his knowledge also, so if the researchers find something useful they may accept it otherwise reject it. Opinions of some scholars in this connection are as under:

He had some books which he used to read but I think he had some knowledge of the Qurān.... Imām Aḥmad.[197]

انما جمع مقاتل تفسير الناس وفسّر عليه من غير سماع

Muqātil had collected the exegesis of different people and made his exegesis accordingly but he did not hear them directly from anyone ..... Ibrāhīm Nakh'ī.

196: Taqrīb ut Tahzīb, v2, p272, refe 134.
197: Tarīkh Baghdād, Khaṭīb, V13 p161. He has related an incident. A fly pestered Khalifah Mansūr again and again always resting on his face, so he was very uneasy. At that moment Muqātil arrived and the Khalifah asked him if he knew why Allah had created the fly. Muqātil said, "That He may debase tyrants through it." The Khalīfah bore the taunt silently. (V13 p161)

كان حافظاً للتفسير لا يضبط الاسناد

He remembered the exegesis but did not know the source..... 'Abbās bin Muṣ'ab Marūzī

- ☆ I saw a book of Muqātil with Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah and asked him, "Do you quote Muqātil's narrations in exegesis?" He said, "No but I take help from them." Na'īm bin Hammād.
- ☆ There is wonderful information in it, only if its narrations were through authentic sources... 'Abdullah bin Mubārak,
- ☆ If the things he describes could be called knowledge, he would be a greater scholar-Hammād bin 'Amr.
- ☆ He used to learn from Jews and Christians from their Books, Imām Ibn Ḥibbān.
- ☆ He has a high status among the commentators and he had vast knowledge, but Traditionists have called him weak in narrating the Traditions...Khalīlī.[198]

Hence, generally his exegesis should not be relied upon. However, from the standpoint of language and literature, history and stories, references of the previous Books, some general useful information is found in it and the research scholars may benefit from it. That is why commentators in general did not feel shy to refer to them.

## RABĪ' BIN ANAS

His name is Rabī' bin Anas Al-Bakrī Al-Ḥanafī. He originally belonged to Baṣrah but afterwards migrated to Khurāsān. Hence he is called Baṣrī and also Khurāsānī. He has quoted narrations from Sayyidina Anas, Abul 'Ālia and Ḥasan Basrī. Imām 'Ijlī, Abu Ḥātim and Nisa'ī, have used

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198: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v10, pp280-284, Mīzān ul-I'tidal, v4, p173. The report from Tahzīb ut Tahzīb are traced to sunnah in Tārīkh Baghdad, Khaṭīb, pp160-169.

the word "ليس به بأس" "صدوق" [199] which is minor grade of affirmation. However, Yaḥyā bin Mu'īn says, كان يتشيع و يفرط "He was a *Shi'a* and committed excess". Imām Ibn Ḥibbān has counted him among the "reliables" but at the same time he has said "there was a great deal of inconsistency in his narrations cited by Ibn Abī Ja'far Rāzi."[200] Ibn Hajar has summarised in these words, "صدوق له اوهام رمى بالتشيّع" "He is truthful, but we get doubts in his reports of Traditions and he is also alleged to be a *Shi'a*."[201]

## 'AṬIYYAH AL-'AUFĪ

His full name is Abul Ḥasan 'Aṭiyyah bin Sa'd bin Junādah al-'Aufi al-Jadlī (died 111AH). He belonged to Kūfah (Iraq) and was among the Tabi'īn (followers of Companions). He had reported narrations from Abu Sa'īd Khudrī, Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar and Zayd bin 'Arqam ﷺ. Imām Nisā'ī has called him weak.[202] Imām Aḥmad, Yaḥyā bin Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, Hushaym, Abu Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī, Jauzjānī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Abu Dāwood and Sājī have also considered him as weak. Only Ibn Sa'd has said about him.

له احاديث صالحة ومن الناس من لا يحتج به

"He reports correct traditions but some people do not authenticate them".

Imām Abu Zur'ah has called him, "لين" Which is a minor grade of affirmation. Yaḥyā bin Mu'īn has called him, "صالح" Righteous which is also a minor affirmation.

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199: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v3, p239. and al-Jarah ut Ta'dīl, Ibn Abi Hātin, v1, p454. (part 2) Refe 2054. Daccan.

200: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, v3, p239.

201: Taqrīb ut Tahzīb, v1, p243.

202: Kitāb ud Ḍu'fā wal Matrūkīn Nasa'ī, Tārīkh us Saghīr, Bukhārī, p401.

There are four kinds of objections against him. Firstly, he has exaggerated when recounting the line of transmission. Imām Aḥmad and Ibn Ḥibbān have explained it thus: "He used to go to Kalbī and ask him about exegesis and quoted him but because Kalbī is regarded weak and defamed, so he gave Kalbī the Kunyah of Abu Sa'īd, and whatever he heard from Kalbī he reported in the name of Abu Sa'īd. Since 'Aṭiyyah Aufī had heard some Traditions from Abu Sa'īd Khudrī, the unknowing people attributed Kalbī's narrations also to Khudrī.[203]

The second objection is that he was a *Shia*, and the third is that he used to make errors in reporting the narrations. The fourth objection is that he was a *Mudallis* (one who withholds the name of his Shaikh) Ibn Hajar said,

صدوق يخطئ كثيراً ، كان شيعياً مدلساً

"He was truthful but was very erratic. He was a *Shia* and *Mudallis*."[204]

Ḥāfiẓ Shamsuddin Zahabī has counted him among the weak and said about him,

تابعی مشهور مجمع على ضعفه

He is a renowned Tābi'ī and there is consensus that he is weak.[205]

However, Imām Tirmizī has considered some of his narrations as 'Ḥasan'[206] but in Tirmizī's phraseology 'Ḥasan' is every such Tradition whose line of transmission does not contain any narrator accused of lying, and it is reported by more than one method.[207]

203: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb, p225-226.
204: Taqrīb ut Tahzīb, v2, p24.
205: Al-Mughni fi Aḍ-du'afa, v2, p436, Refe 4139.
206: Al-Itqān, v2, p189.
207: Kitāb-ul- 'Ilal Tirmizī.

Hence, even with Tirmizī's complement the objection made on 'Aṭiyyah 'Aufī are not condoned and his weakness as a Traditionist persists.

## 'ABDUR RAḤMĀN BIN ZAYD BIN ASLAM'

His full name is 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Zayd bin Aslam al-'Adavī al-Madanī (died 182 AH).'He was the son of Zayd bin Aslam whose account we have gone through the preceding pages. Most of the Traditionists have considered him weak. Only Imām bin 'Adī has said,

له احاديث حسان، وهو ممن احتمله الناس وصدقه بعضهم وهو ممن يكتب حديثه

He has reported ḥasan *Aḥādith* and he is among those narrators who have been tolerated. And some have affirmed them, and the Tradtions from him can be cited. All other critics hve taken him as weak, as enumerated below:

ضعفه علي جدا

(Ali ibn Madini has called him very weak).[208]

Imām Nasa'ī: weak.[209] Imām Aḥmad and Imām Abu Zur'ah: weak. Imam Abū Dawood: all sons of Zayd ibn Aslam are weak. Imām Abu Ḥātim: personally, righteous, but in *Ḥadith*, very weak. Imam Ibn Khuzaymah said:

ليس هو ممن يحتج اهل العلم بحديثه لسوء حفظه، وهو رجل صناعته العبادة والتقشف۔

He is not one of those, persons whose narration the scholars may cite because his memory was weak.

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208: At Tārīkh al-Kabir, Bukhārī, v3, p284.
209: Kitāb-ul-Ḍu'afā wal Matrūkīn. Tārīkh as-Saghīr. p296.

His real merit was devotion and piety.

Imām Ibn Ḥibbān says:

كان يقلب الاخبار وهو لا يعلم حتى كثر ذلك فى روايته من رفع المراسيل و باسناد الموقوف فاستحق الترك

He used to alter the narrations unintentionally so much so that there are many examples where he has made Mursals into Marfu' and Mauqūf into Musnad, hence he should be forsaken.

Imām Ṭaḥāvī states:

حديثه عند اهل العلم بالحديث فى النهاية من الضعف

In the eyes of Tradditionists his narrations are very weak.

In addition, severe criticism is reported about him from Imām Mālik, Imām Ibn Mu'īn, Darawardī, Ma'an, Imām Ibn Sa'd, Sājī, Ḥākim, Abu Nu'aym and Jauzjānī. Ibn Jozī has written,

اجمعوا على ضعفه

There is consensus that he is weak.[210]

Ibn Ḥajar's conclusion about him is that he was 'weak'.[211]

## KALBĪ

His full name is Abu Naḍar Muḥammad bin Sā'ib bin Bishr bin 'Amr bin 'Abdul Ḥārith bin Abdul 'Uzzā al-Kalibī (died 146 AH). He was related to the tribe of Banu Kalb and was from Kūfah. He was well-known as

210: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb v6 pp177-179. Mizān ul I'tidāl, v2, p564.
211: Tahzīb ut Tahzīb v1 p480.

a historian and in geneology and exegesis. There is a consensus of scholars that he was weak and unreliable. Only Ibn 'Adī has said about him, "All his narrations are correct except those pointed out by me, particularly those reported by Abu-Ṣāliḥ. He is famous for exegesis and nobody else has written a longer commentary. And some reliable persons have quoted his narrations and endured his exegesis. However, his Traditions are *Munkar*, rejected." All other scholars have censured him severely.

The most serious allegation against him is that of reporting false Traditions. Mu'tamar bin Sulaymān has quoted his father as saying, "There were two liars in Kūfah. One of them was Kalbī." In exegesis, most of his reports are borrowed from Abu Ṣāliḥ but Abu Janāb Kalbī has stated that Abu Ṣāliḥ has stated on oath that he never spoke anything of exegesis to Kalbī. Sufyān Thaurī states, "Once Kalbī himself admitted that the narrations of Ibn 'Abbās which he reported from Abu Ṣāliḥ were all lies and should not be quoted. Some traditions have been narrated by Sufyān Thaurī on the authority of Kalbī. From this some people got the impression that Kalbī must be authentic because a Tradtionist of the status of Sufyān had cited him. But this has been clarified by Abu Ḥātim in these words, "Sufyān Thaurī never meant to cite the narration of Kalbī, but he sometimes narrated Kalbī's versions in his assembly in expression of surprise. On this some of his listeners reported them from Sufyān Thaurī.[212] Qurrah bin Khālid has said, "People generally believed that Kalbī was a liar."

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212: All these narrations are qouted from Tahzīb at Tahzīb. However, Zahabī reported from Sufyan Thaurī that he once said to the people "Beware of Kalbī." They said, "But you qoute him." He said, "I can distinguish his truth from falsehood."

The other objection is that he was an extremist *Shi'a* Abu Juz says, "I have heard him saying that Jibril ﷺ once came with *Wahy* for the Prophet ﷺ who had come out for some work and Sayyidina 'Ali ؓ was sitting there so Jibril revealed that *Wahy* to 'Ali." When this saying of Abu Juz was repeated before the great Traditionist Yazid bin Zari' he said, "I did not hear this from Kalbi but I have seen myself that he was beating his chest and saying 'I am a Saba'i, I am a Saba'i." The same has been reported by Hafiz Zahabi from Hummam. And Ibn Hibban said, "Kalbi was a Saba'i. He was one of those who used to say Sayyidina 'Ali ؓ has not died, he will come again in this world and he will fill it with justice and fairplay when it will be full of tyranny and injustice. These are the people who say Amir-ul-Mu'minin ('Ali) is in it," when they see a cloud.

In short, Kalbi is the weakest commentator of the earlier era. Imam Ahmad was asked, "Is it proper to study the exegesis of Kalbi?" His reply was "*No*". After a long account of Kalbi, Hafiz Zahabi has wtitten, لا يحل ذكره في الكتب فكيف الا حتجاج به؟ "Even his mention in the books is not proper, how then would it be correct to cite him."

In the end, one of his witticisms is being presented just for a diversion. Kalbi himself used to say, "I have exhibited the excellence of my memory as nobody could have done, and also that of my forgetfulness as nobody could have done. The example of my memory is that I had memorised the whole Quran in six or seven days. And the case of forgetfulness is that one day I held my beard in my fist to trim it below the fist but through foregetfulness I cut it off from above the fist."

Many other names are found in the books of exegesis, but those mentioned in this chapter are the ones who are referred to frequently. And it will not be wrong to say that

the basic source of later exegesis are these commentators, and most of the exegesis revolve round the narrations and reports of these people. Hence, by knowing about these people great insight will be obtained in the study of all such exegesis where the method of exegesis by narrations is adopted, namely, Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, Tafsīr-ad-Durrul-Manthūr, and Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr etc, or those Tafsīr in which the sayings of ancient commentators have been reported without proper citation, for instance, Rūḥul Ma'ānī Tafsīr Qurṭabī and others.

## SOME EXEGESIS OF LATER TIMES

As has been stated in the beginning of this chapter, we have confined ourselves to the introduction of some of those commentators of the first era on whose narrations and sayings are based the entire science of exegesis. Whatever exegesis were written in the later periods and in whichever style the scholars of Islam rendered their services to the Qurān, is a lengthy subject that calls for writing a separate book. Nobody can claim to have fulfilled the due right of exegesis of the Qurān, but it is also an undeniable fact that the lovers of Islam have worked hard and with love and devotion in service of this great Book. Hence it can be claimed without any fear of contradiction that neither have so many exegeses of any book been written, nor so many translations made, and as much service rendered to it from different aspects although no universal organization was present at anytime for this purpose.

Anyhow, today it has become very easy to obtain benefit from the Qurān in the light of these services. Whoever wants to know the exegesis of any verse of the Qurān, libraries are available to him. If an introduction is made only of those exegesis that are available today a

complete compilation will be needed even for that. But here I will present a brief description even for that. But here I will present a brief description of only some exegesis to which I am deeply indebted, and which appear to me to be a summary of exegetic knowledge of our predecessors. And whenever I felt any problem in the exegesis of a verse I have first turned towards them. My humble opinion about them is that for people like us who cannot make a regular study of voluminous exegesis, these books make up the want of other books.

## 1: TAFSĪR IBN-KATHĪR

On top of the list of these books if *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*. This is the work of Ḥāfiẓ 'Imāduddin Abul Fida' Isma'īl bin Al-Khaṭīb Abi Ḥafṣ 'Umar bin Kathīr Ash-Shafa'ī (died 747 AH) and comprises four volumes. This book may be regarded as a summary of *Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr*. The method adopted by Ibn-Kathīr is Exegesis by narrations, that is, under every verse he has first described a summary of its exegesis, then he mentions whatever narrations and reports are available from the Prophet ﷺ, or the Companions or their followers to explain its various words or sentences. But the earlier commentators viz. Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardawayh and Ibn Mājah etc who had followed this method only undertook the compiling of those narrations but they did not scrutinize them. Since Ibn Kathīr was also an eminent Traditionist apart from being a commentator, and was well versed in the art of criticism and review, he has done away with those weak and Maw-ḍū' narrations which were being transmitted by earlier commentators and, he has warned about relying on weak narrations. For instance see v1, pp77, 213 v3, pp17 to 21 and 24 to 89, v4, pp508, 519 and 520 etc.

The books on Exegesis by Narrations are mostly full of Isra'īliyyats. Ibn Kathīr is extremely cautious in treating these citations and his approach is clean and based on the Qurān and Traditions. Its detail has already been given under the heading Isra'iliyyāts in his own words. Hence, his first approach is that he has not cited many Isrā'īli narrations, and, if he has done so, he has defined them as Isrā'īli narrations. For instance, in *Sūrah aṣ Ṣāffāt* he has quoted some reports which indicate that the sacrifice offered related to Sayyidina Ibrāhīm's ﷺ son Sayyidina Is'ḥāq ﷺ, but he has immediately clarified "Allah knows better, but apparently all these narrations have been reported by Ka'b ul-Aḥbār.......in these reports all sorts of things, good and bad, were collected and this *Ummah* does not need a single word of all those things." (v4, p17)

Anyhow, from the narrative point of view Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr is the most cautious and reliable exegesis. But this does not mean that every narration quoted in this exegesis is correct. At some places Ibn Kathīr has also quoted weak reports without indicating their weakness. For example, while explaining the verse of *sūrah at-Tawbah*, he has quoted a report from Tha'labah which according to Traditionists is weak. (v2, p374.)

Apart from this, he has also cited many sayings of 'weak' commentators, namely Muqātil, Kalbī and 'Aṭiyyah 'Aufī etc. But generally he has quoted without comment only those sayings which are not against any Islamic tenet. Hence, they are not of an authentic nature but only a commentator's own statement.

## 2: TAFSĪR KABĪR

The second book is *Tafsīr Kabīr* of Imām Rāzi. Its real name is *Mafātīḥ-ul-Ghāyb* but it is better known by the name of *Tafsīr Kabīr*. This is written by Imām Fakhruddīn Muḥammad Ibn Ziyāuddīn 'Umar Ar-Rāzi (died 606 AH). Just as *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* is the most concise and matchless exegesis from a narrative point of view so also there is no parallel to *Tafsīr Kabīr* in relation to sciences of Reason. Some people have passed a funny remark on this exegesis فيه كل شىء الا التفسير (In it there is everything except exegesis).[213] But the fact is that this remark is cruely unjust to this 'book because this book has no equal in interpretation of the meanings of the Qurān.

The prominent features of this book are:

1: The explanation, grammatical composition and background of revelation, and all the narrations related to them have been described by Imām Rāzi in an organised manner with clarity and detail. Thus, the number of sayings in explanation of a particular verse are reproduced together and easily observed. In other exegeses these discussions are generally scattered or disorganized, due to which it becomes time consuming. But in *Tafsīr Kabīr* they can be found at one place and very well organised.

2: He has described the grandeur and majesty of the Qurān in detail.

3: The legal injunctions relating to a verse have been described with detailed reasons.

4: Any interpolations introduced by the erring sects and intellectuals in the meaning of any verse has

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213: Al-Itqān, v2, But, in my humble opinion if this comment applies to any Tafsīr, it describes *Tafsīr al-Tawahir*, Ṭanṭāwi.

been described in full and then refuted with detailed arguments. In this way it contains in it strong refutation of all the erring sects of his time, namely, *Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, Mujassimah, Ibāḥiyyah* etc.

5: A very specific feature of Tafsīr Kabīr to which very little attention has been paid is the description of the link between the verses of the Qurān. It is a fact that the reason for a link and affinity between the verses as described by him is so casual, appealing and reasonable that not only it imparts a sense of satisfaction but also an ecstatic feeling of elegance and grandeur of the Qurān.

6: Qurānic injunctions and their mysteries and expediences have been very beautifully highlighted.

In short, Tafsīr Kabīr is a very concise exegesis and my personal experience is that whenever I have found a difficulty, it has guided me to the right answer. Commonly people get upset by its lengthy discussions, (the exegesis of *Sūrah Fātiḥah* alone has covered 150 pages). It is in the earlier part that the explanation is lengthy but takes on fewer words as it progresses. Priceless gems of knowledge and understanding may be received from it.

However, certain things must be kept in mind in connection with this exegesis:

1: Imām Rāzi had written this exegesis upto *Sūrah al-Fatḥ* when he died. Hence, after this Sūrah another scholar Qāḍi Shahābud-dīn bin Khalīl al Khaulī, al Damashqī (died 639 AH) or Shaikh Najm ud dīn Aḥmad bin Al-Qamūli (died 777 AH)[214] completed it. It is so marvelously done and the style of Imām Rāzi has been so thoroughly maintained

214: Kashf-uẓ-Ẓunūn, v2, p477.

that anyone not aware of this fact would never suspect that this was written by someone other than Imām Rāzi.

2: The narrations of *Tafsīr Kabīr*, like other exegeses are a collection of good and bad together.

3: Occasionally Imām Rāzi has adopted a view different from that of other commentators. For instance, he has rejected the authentic tradition لم يكذب ابراهيم الا ثلث كذبات (Ibrāhīm did not tell a lie except on three occasions). Hence, where he has differed from the accepted view, the established view should be adopted.

## 3: TAFSĪR ABĪ AS-SA'ŪD

The full name of this exegesis is *Irshād-ul-'Aql-is-Salīm Ilā Mazāya Al-Qurān al-Karīm*. It is written by Qāḍi Abu Sa'ūd Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Al-'Imāḍī al-Ḥanafī (died 951 AH). It is indeed a masterpiece work, exhibiting his depth of knowledge, insight and understanding of Qurān. It has five volumes and is a magnificent exegesis of the Qurān in a concise manner. The most prominent feature of this exegesis is that one finds some highly refined and subtle points about the Qurān, relation of its verse and its eloquence. It allows for an easy understanding of the Qurān and the excellence of its miraculous style can also be easily recognized.

## 4: TAFSĪR Al-QURṬUBĪ

Its full name is *Al-Jāmi' li -Aḥkām-ul-Qurān*. It is written by the famous research scholar of Andulus Spain, 'Allāmah Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Abī Bakr bin Faraḥ al-Qurṭubī (died 671 AH). He was a follower of Imām Mālik's school of

thought in Islamic Jurisprudence. The basic purpose of this book was to deduce juristic injunctions and rulings from the Qurānic verses but in this connection he has very aptly commented on the meanings of verses, scrutiny of difficult words, composition and rhetoric and relevant narrations in the exegesis. Particularly the instructions obtainable from the Qurān for everyday life have been clearly explained. The preface of this book is also detailed and comprises important discussions on the sciences of the Qurān. It has twelve volumes and has been published repeatedly.

## 5: RŪḤ-UL-MA'ĀNĪ

Its full name is *Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr-il-Qurān-il-'Aẓīm wa Sab'ul Mathānī* and this is written by the renowned scholar of Baghdad 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ālūsī Ḥanafi رحمة الله عليه (died 1270 AH) and consists of 30 volumes. Since this is the publication of latest era, he has tried to gather important discussions of previous exegeses. Hence elaborate discussions have been carried out on language, grammar, literature, rhetoric, jurisprudence, beliefs, etymology, geophysics, astronomy, philosophy, spiritualism and relevant narrations. An attempt has been made that no scientific and literary problem should remain unanswered. In the matter of reporting of Traditions also 'Allāmah Ālūsī had been more careful than other commentators. In this respect it may be called synopsis of the earlier exegeses, and no work on exegesis of Qurān can do without help from this work.

The above five exegeses, according to my humble opinion are such that if anyone confines himself to them, he will not have to look out for other exegesis. This was my personal view, but later on I found

support for it in an article written by the respected and venerable scholar Mawlana Sayyed Muhammad Yūsuf Banorī. In his precious article *Yatīmat-ul-Bayān* he writes:

> "Since life is short, difficulties excessive, and courage of our time is low and resolves weakened... hence I wish to point out to my student brothers four such exegesis as would be sufficient for them if they just confine themselves to these.
>
> One is, *Tafsīr Ibn kathīr* about which our teacher ('Allāmah Anwar Shah Kashmīrī) used to say, 'if any book can make one independent of another book, it is *Tafsīr Ibn kathīr* which removes the need for *Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr*.' The second is Tafsīr Kabīr of Imam Rāzi about which our reverend teacher used to say, 'Of all the difficult things in the Qurān I did not find any difficulty which Imām Rāzi had not dealt with. It is another matter that sometimes he could not present a solution to the difficulties as could satisfy the soul.' And the saying that it has everything but Tafsīr is meant only to lower its exalted status, and is perhaps uttered by a person who was overwhelmed by narrations and paid no attention to the depth of knowledge of the Qurān. The third is *Tafsīr Rūḥ ul Ma'ānī* which in my opinion is an exegesis for the Qurān on the pattern of *Fat-ḥ-ul-Bārī*, the exegesis of Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, except that Fatḥ-ul-Bārī is the interpretation of human words. It has paid the debt of the exegesis of Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī on the *Ummah*. But the words of Allāh are much higher and more

exalted for any human being to give its due right. The Fourth is *Tafsīr Abi as-Sa'ūd* in which special attention has been paid to describe the Qurānic order in a remarkable style and very often it replaces Zamakhshari's Kashāf."[215]

In this aricle, except for Tafsīr Qurṭubi, all the other four books have been recommended on the same lines as I had conceived. I thank Almighty Allah for the similarity of my views with the reverend Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and his favourite student Mawlānā B inori.

This discussion pertained to exegeses in Arabic language. In Urdu language Maulānā Ashraf 'Ali Thānavi's رحمة الله عليه *Bayān-ul-Qurān* is unique exegesis in respect to its subjects; and its greatness can be felt only when one turns towards it after passing through the voluminous books on exegesis. However, since its language is high flown and technical, general Urdu readers felt difficulty in understanding it. In view of this my esteemed father Maulānā Mufti Muḥammad Shaf'i رحمة الله عليه has written a detailed exegesis in 8 volumes by the name of *Ma'ārif-ul-Qurān* which also contains a simplified and summerised version of *Bayān-ul-Qurān*. It contains an excellent interpretatioon of the Quranic injunctions pertaing to present day requirements of life as well as a complete review of the problems of modern civilisation. Of all the books of exegesis that have come out so far in Urdu language this is a unique exegesis in which alongwhith a complete presentation of the ways and ideas of the ancient dignitaries in exegesis, the needs

215: Yatimatul Bayān, Muqaddama (preface) Mushkilātul Qurān, pp23,24. Majlis 'Ilmi, Delhi 1357. AH.

of present time have also been fulfilled in the best possible manner. By the Grace of Allah this exegesis is gaining immense popularity and tremendous benefits are being obtained by its readers.

In the end I pray that Almighty Allah may give us the ability to recognize the elegance and grandeur of the Noble Qurān, bestow on us the wealth of its true understanding, and give us the capacity to pay the due rights through recital, practise on its injunctions and its propagation and publicity.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰنِسْ وَحْشَتِیْ فِیْ قَبْرِیْ اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِیْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ الْعَظِيْمِ
وَاجْعَلْهُ لِیْ اِمَامًا وَّنُوْرًا وَّهُدًی وَّرَحْمَةً، اَللّٰهُمَّ عَلِّمْنِیْ مِنْهُ مَا
جَهِلْتُ وَذَكِّرْنِیْ مِنْهُ مَا نَسِيْتُ وَارْزُقْنِیْ تِلَاوَتَهٗ اٰنَآءَ اللَّيْلِ وَاٰنَآءَ
النَّهَارِ وَاجْعَلْهُ لِیْ حُجَّةً يَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ۔

وَلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ اَوَّلًا وَّاٰخِرًا، وَصَلَّی اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰی عَلٰی سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا
مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰی اٰلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ وَاَزْوَاجِهٖ وَاَتْبَاعِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

O Allah, protect me from the fear of my grave. O Allah, have mercy on me through the Great Qurān, and let it be for me a leader, a light, a guide and a mercy. O Allah, teach me of it what I know not, and remind me what I have forgotten of it, and cause me to recite it by day and by night. And, let it be a pleader for me, O Lord of the worlds.

Praise belongs to Allah, from the first to the last. And may blessings of Allah be on Sayyidina

Muḥammad and his family, his companions, his wives and his followers, all of them.

***Muḥammad Taqī 'Uthmānī***
(Lailatul Juma of 15 Rabī uth-Thānī
1396 AH. Dārul 'Ulūm Karachi).

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## Uloom ul-Quran
# An Approach to The Quranic Sciences
**by Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani**

The Uloom ul-Qur'an is a great scholarly work in Urdu by the renowned scholar Maulana Justice Muhammad Taqi Usmani.

It has the stamp of authority of Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمة الله عليه, and Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Binnori رحمة الله عليه.

The work covers all aspects of the Qur'an, from wahy (revelation) to tajweed (its recital) and various readings. It speaks on the background of revelation, nature of revelation, method of preservation, kinds of exegesis, critisim of orientalists, history and subjects of the Qur'an.

The Urdu original is indeed a collosal treatise on the Qur'an, leaving out nothing related to the Holy Book.

Dar ul-Isha'at commissioned for the English translation in Dr. Muhammad Swaleh Siddiqui. Before publication, the entire work was given a second look and is now offered to our readers.

The translation also features an index of Proper Names and of general entries.

## Qasas ul-Anbiya
# Stories of the Prophets
**by Ibn Kathir**

Dar ul-Isha'at has presented yet another English translation. This time it is the Qasas ul-Anbiya of Ibn Kathir رحمة الله عليه.

The book is primarily lives of the Prophets based on material from the Qur'an and Ahadith. It is drawn from *al-Bidayah wan Nihayah.*

It is written in simple, everyday language.

While the Arabic original concludes with the life of Sayyidina Isa, عليه السلام in the English translation we have included an account of the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ material for which is drawn from Qasas ul-Qur'an.

The features include two indices an index of Proper Names and of general entries.

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- Vice President *Darul-Uloom*, Karachi
- Member Commission for Islamization Of Economy, Government of Pakistan.
- Chairman/ Member on Shariah Supervisory Boards of a dozen of Islamic banks and financial institutions In different parts of the world.
- Chief Editor of the Monthly *"Albalagh"* (Urdu) since 1967 and Monthly "*Albalagh* International" (English) since 1990.
- Contributing articles/ write-up in Leading news papers of the country on Various Issues.
- Authored more than 50 books in Arabic, Urdu and English.

There are many authoritative books on the sciences of the Quran in Arabic composed by our worthy, noted predecessors. However, only the Scholars derive benefit from those books. The common man had no source to draw on.

When Sir Syed Ahmad Khan published his *Tafseer* he challenged prevalent beliefs, commented on established issues like prophethood and rejected the reality of miracles, Paradise and Hell, angels and the devil. Maulana Abdul Haq Haqqani Dehlvi gave him a befitting reply and composed *al-Bayan fi Uloom il Quran* and *Fath al Manan* explaining the subject very well. However, the need for a work of the same magnitude from a fresh approach to cater to the present generation was satisfied by Maulana Muhammad Taqi Usmani with his *Uloom ul Quran* which is indeed a peerless work in Urdu. The same is now offered to the reader in English language. The book is an insight into the facts of the Quran, nature of revelation, sequence of revelations different readings, the miracles of the Quran and so on.

They have been explained in everyday language and they remove all doubts and misgivings. The criticism of the orientalists are answered with authoritative references.

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